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VOL. III No. 6

MARCH 1950

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THE PRESS

R. S. R.

1

THE Royal Commission on the Press, whose report¹ was published last June, was appointed after a motion for an official inquiry into the press had been carried in the House of Commons in October 1946. In that debate the inquiry was demanded by a number of Labour journalists. For two or three years previously demands for such an inquiry had been made by spokesmen of the National Union of Journalists, frequently coupled with attacks on the conservative press, especially the Kemsley papers. The proposer of the motion in the House of Commons was a journalist Member on the staff of the *News Chronicle*, and the seconder was one of the editors of *Tribune*. In London at any rate, members of the chapel of the National Union of Journalists in the *News Chronicle-Star* offices were particularly vocal in the attacks on the Kemsley press and in the demand for an inquiry.

The terms of reference required the Commission:

with the object of furthering the free expression of opinion through the Press and the greatest practicable accuracy in the presentation of news, to inquire into the control, management and ownership of the newspaper and periodical Press and the news agencies, including the financial structure and the monopolistic tendencies in control, and to make recommendations thereon.

These terms suggest that control, management, ownership, finance and matters closely related to these are the major considerations in the accurate presentation of the news. The Commission decided to keep closely to this suggestion and to consider principally the present degree of concentration of ownership (together with the recent tendencies in this field), and to examine the effects of this and all other closely related circumstances on the freedom and accuracy of the press. And this, no doubt, explains its unfortunate preoccupation with secondary and even trivial points and its neglect of the major influences on the supply of information and the character of the press.

2

In recent years it has been widely believed that there is a strong tendency towards concentration of newspaper production, especially in the production of daily papers, and that this has already resulted in a position of near monopoly in the supply of news. The tendency

¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Press*, Cmd. 7700.

was, moreover, supposed to reflect the very heavy capital cost of starting a newspaper, the economies of large-scale production and the vast financial resources of a handful of proprietors. The chapters and appendices dealing with these and related matters are the best in the Report; they contain much information of which only a few items can be mentioned here.

There are nine national morning newspapers in Great Britain and of these no two are in the same ownership. As all of these can reach readers throughout the country on the morning of their publication, there is no monopoly or near monopoly in the supply of news of national importance. The *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mirror* are by far the largest newspapers with daily circulations in July 1947 of 3.8 and 3.7 million respectively.¹ This gave each just under one-quarter of the aggregate circulation of national morning papers, about one-fifth of the total circulation of morning papers (the circulation of national and provincial dailies) and between one-seventh and one-eighth of the total circulation of general daily newspapers. The newspapers with the next largest daily circulation barely exceeded one-half of the circulation of these two mammoths. The Kemsley press controls about one-twentieth of the national morning circulation and one-fifth of the Sunday morning circulation. By far the largest Sunday circulation is that of the *News of the World* with about 8 million or just over one-quarter of the total; this paper does not belong to a chain or combine. In short, the view that near monopoly conditions exist in the press is pure myth. There are instances of local newspapers being without an exactly similar competitor in their locality, but such papers invariably have to face competition from the national newspapers and usually also from other papers published in the neighbourhood or from independent weekly papers published locally. This conclusion is not surprising, though it is valuable to have it so authoritatively presented.

More unexpected, however, is the trend away from concentration found by the Commission. This is a somewhat more complex matter since the conclusion is affected by the year or years chosen for the basis of comparison, by the criteria adopted and by the type of newspaper considered. But an investigation of the period 1921²-48

¹ These were the pegged circulation figures to which the newspapers were restricted when newsprint was rationed in 1947. The restriction was lifted early in 1949 and the circulation of both these papers increased but that of the *Daily Mirror* appreciably more than that of the *Daily Express*. The *Daily Mirror* has at present a circulation of about 4½ million and that of the *Daily Express* is just about 4 million. The percentage figures (calculated from the data in the Report and the appendixes) are not materially affected.

² Adopted by the Commission as being the first year after the official end of the emergency period of the First World War.

has resulted in the surprising conclusion that in spite of a decrease in the total number of newspapers over this period, the trend has been away from concentration in terms of all significant criteria.

There is now no concentration of ownership in this field approaching that held by the first Lord Rothermere in 1922, or even the lesser concentration of the Berry interests before their division in 1937. The largest concentration amounts only to four newspapers, one morning and three Sundays, and the next largest to three papers, one morning, one evening and one Sunday (Para. 320).

To sum up: there were fewer daily and Sunday newspapers in the five chains in 1948 than in 1929 and the proportion which the daily number of daily and Sunday papers in the five chains bore to the total number in the country was lower (Para. 327).¹ During the twenty-seven years between the end of 1921 and the end of 1948, there was a marked tendency away from concentration in the ownership of the national Press; in the provincial Press the trend was strongly towards concentration between 1921 and 1929; thereafter taking the five chains as a whole, the trend was much less pronounced and in terms of the largest single chain it was reversed (Para. 328).

The concentration in terms of circulation is compared only for the years 1937 and 1947, as earlier figures are not strictly comparable:

In terms of circulations controlled the chains lost ground during that period not only in the National morning and Sunday classes but also in the Provincial mornings and evenings (Para. 329).

In short:

We have shown that the chains grew more slowly during the 'thirties than during the 'twenties; that there was some tendency from 1937 onwards for chains to contract and the concentration of ownership to break up; and that in comparison with other undertakings chains were in no stronger a position in 1946 than in 1937 (Para 335).

And of the contemporary projects for starting new national and provincial newspapers which came to the notice of the Commission, most were unconnected with existing chains.

But while there is no monopoly, or tendency to monopoly, in the

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ownership of the press, a near monopoly seems to prevail on the staff side, which may indeed become a complete monopoly. According to its General Secretary, the membership of the National Union of Journalists comprises about 80 to 90 per cent of all editorial staffs;¹ and the Union hopes to be able to introduce a completely closed shop throughout the industry.² Mr Haydn Davies, who proposed the motion in the House of Commons which led to the appointment of the Commission, favoured this particular form of monopoly, although he was opposed to concentration in the ownership of newspapers. The sort of results which may be expected to flow from a complete monopoly by members of the National Union of Journalists of employment on newspaper staffs can be best appreciated by a perusal of their evidence before the Commission.

A number of items of minor but not negligible interest emerge as by-products of the inquiries of the Commission into the ownership and control of the Press. The comparative changes in the circulation of the national morning newspapers between 1930, 1937 and 1947 presented in Appendix III, show the remarkable success of the *Daily Mirror*. Both in absolute numbers and proportionately its circulation has risen more than that of any other paper during the latter period. In 1937 its circulation was just over 1.3 million (13.4 per cent of the national morning circulation); in 1947 it was 3.7 million (24 per cent of the total), an increase of 179 per cent; the circulation of no other daily paper increased at even half of that rate. Since then, the circulation has risen further (after the lifting of the ban on increases in circulation), and with its daily circulation of about 4½ million copies the *Daily Mirror* is probably the largest newspaper in the world. Its sister paper the *Sunday Pictorial* has also had a remarkable career in recent years; its circulation increased by almost 200 per cent between 1937 and 1947, but in absolute size it is still far behind the *News of the World*. By contrast with the *Daily Mirror*, the only other tabloid, the *Daily Graphic* has declined appreciably and its circulation in 1947 at 772,000 was about one-sixth less than it had been in 1930. While the *Daily Mirror* is undoubtedly a brightly produced and alert paper, it is probable that its peculiar combination of sex, socialism and denigration has been a major factor in its spectacular progress. The inquiries of the Commission have also disposed of the myth which was current a few years ago that the policy of the *Daily Mirror* was controlled by a mysterious group of owners hiding behind nominee holdings. There is no share holding either in the *Daily Mirror* or in the *Sunday Pictorial* sufficiently large to secure control, and editorial policy is controlled by the editor and his staff. Conversely it is not true that the articles of either The *Times* Holding Company or The *Times* Publishing Company protect the independ-

¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, Q. 8.

² Qs. 421-3.

ence of the editor. Thus there was no formal provision which would have barred Colonel Astor from terminating the appointment of the late Mr R. M. Barrington Ward if he had wished to do so.¹

Misrepresentation of the news and suppression of information, encouraged largely by the present ownership of the newspapers, was a principal contention of the National Union of Journalists both in their memorandum of evidence and especially in the oral evidence of their principal spokesmen. But this evidence although it purported to be a survey of the press, was simply an attack on one section of it, particularly the Kemsley papers. The official memorandum of evidence submitted by the Union, which deals largely with misrepresentation, mentioned every national morning newspaper by name except the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Worker*; the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald* were mentioned only very briefly and casually. The oral evidence was even more selective and much more violent. But the evidence consisted very largely of unsupported general statements and a few specific charges, mostly rather trivial or unfounded. The tirades were directed largely against the Kemsley press, while the *Daily Worker*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *News Chronicle* were apparently not thought to be liable to misrepresent or suppress information. The tendentiousness of this evidence was so manifest that the Commission could not forbear to comment on it:

We called before us several of the journalists who spoke in favour of the Motion demanding the appointment of the Commission, but neither they nor the National Union of Journalists produced much positive evidence in support of their criticism, and some of what was produced did not stand up to examination. The Memorandum submitted to us by the Union was not a survey of the Press as a whole, but rather an attack on the Right Wing portion of it. The Memorandum gave us no coherent and comprehensive picture and no means of reaching general conclusions about the extent and character of the abuses which had been said to exist (Para. 387).

The Commission examined the performance of the press in the presentation of the news partly with reference to the evidence submitted to it, and partly on the basis of a fairly systematic study of the treatment in the press over a period of a few weeks of four selected news items relating to the coal-mining industry, the housing programme, the introduction of bread rationing, and the Gravesend

¹ There is a special provision in the articles of The *Times* Holding Company restricting the transfers of ordinary shares to persons other than Colonel Astor or Mr John Walter without the consent of a particularly august committee. This provision is often mistaken for one guaranteeing editorial independence.

by-election of 1947. Most of the evidence submitted came from the National Union of Journalists and similar sources. It was found that the treatment of news in the popular papers was frequently very inaccurate by any reasonable standard; and that it was usually marred by excessive political bias. At the same time the control of the press was recognized to be sufficiently diffused to provide for a large variety of political opinion. According to the Commission the defects of the press are independent of its present ownership and are not noticeably more marked on the Right or on the Left. The treatment of news in the provincial papers compared favourably with that in the national press published in London. The *Daily Worker* was found to be in a class by itself for misrepresentation and the distortion of news.¹ But one of the worst examples of distortion mentioned in the report relates to the treatment in the *Daily Express* of an important speech by General Marshall when Secretary of State.²

3

Before examining the implications of the conclusions of the Commission on the performance of the press, a brief discussion of the evidence of the National Union of Journalists and of its supporters seems to be called for. This evidence is important not on account of its accuracy, but because the National Union of Journalists comprises between four-fifths and nine-tenths of the journalists in this country and it hopes to introduce a cast-iron closed shop throughout the industry. As the Union and its spokesmen played a leading part in the events leading to the establishment of the Commission, its representatives had ample time and opportunity to prepare a case and present evidence which should stand up to examination. In fact their evidence was remarkably feeble. A few examples from their leading spokesmen will provide the flavour.

Three prominent Left-wing journalists, Mr Michael Foot (co-editor of *Tribune* and for four years acting editor of the *Evening Standard*), Mr Percy Cudlipp (editor of the *Daily Herald* who was for five years editor of the *Evening Standard*) and Mr Tom Driberg (a regular contributor to *Reynolds News* and for fifteen years contributor to the *Daily Express*), complained about the existence of black lists on the Beaverbrook papers while they served on them. They went so far as to specify the individuals said to have been on the black list (a list of persons to whom no reference is to be made). But examination by the Commission of the files of the papers revealed that during the association of these journalists with the papers, the individuals said to have been black-listed were, in fact, referred to scores or even hundreds of times.³

¹ Paras. 444-8.² Paras. 413-7.³ Paras. 461-6.

The oral evidence teems with statements and accusations by spokesmen of the N.U.J. and their supporters, which they were unable to substantiate with even a single example. The following is the text of an exchange between Mr Ensor and one of the witnesses who participated in the drafting of the Memorandum of the N.U.J. The witness had raised specific charges of the suppression of important items of news.

'Do you know of any example of anything like that occurring?' — 'I am not prepared to say.'

'You are a person of long and wide experience?' — 'Yes.'

'And yet you cannot give us a single illustration of that actually occurring?' — 'I am not prepared to give any definite instance but under the system it could occur at any time.'

'You are making very serious charges and yet you cannot with all your experience give us any substantiation of them. I want to help you to produce anything better if you have it.' — 'I think what I have said shows the general trend of the Kemsley Press, and I am sure in my own mind that it is definitely detrimental' (Qs. 2682-5).

Other examples are provided by the evidence of Mr Haydn Davies, the proposer of the motion in the House of Commons initiating the inquiry:

'Can you give definite examples of twisting news or the direction of opinion from above, in the interest of those objects?' —

'Fortunately for me I have never worked for them. The whole of my journalistic life has been with the *News Chronicle* and the *Star*, where we do not have that kind of directive or pressure from the top. But I know plenty of Fleet Street gossip about it.'

'We want something more than mere gossip.' — 'I have had no personal experience of it. I have never been told to write a story against my own conscience' (Qs. 3381-2).

And again:

'Do you consider that the Westminster Group is equally objectionable?' — 'Yes.'

'Have you ever studied the Westminster Group?' — 'I know them.'

'Do you consider that they are subject to directives from the centre?' — 'I would not know.'

'Can you give me any illustrations in the Westminster Group of the type of thing you complain of?' — 'No. I know only a few of the men who work for it. They are largely provincial papers.'

'Do they complain to you?' — 'No' (Qs. 3389-93).

Mr Davies had by that time been working full-time for the *Star* and the *News Chronicle* for over fifteen years.

When slightly more complex issues came up for review, which were, however, still relevant to the criticism of the press or to the proposals for its reform, the journalist witnesses (including the Members of Parliament who spoke in the House of Commons debate on the press) were found to be very ill-informed. This applied to such matters as the background and training of some of the leading newspaper proprietors; the actual extent of the concentration of ownership of the press; the decline in the status of editors; the cost of starting a newspaper and so forth. The evidence of Mr Foot (seventh and fourteenth days) and of Mr Davies (eleventh day), especially when questioned by Mr Ensor, revealed a surprising lack of information and reflected poorly on the sponsors of the inquiry. They were particularly ill-informed about events which occurred more than a few years ago.

Apart from sheer lack of information, the journalist evidence also reflected thinly disguised political motives. This was to be expected from the campaign which preceded the appointment of the Royal Commission. The evidence of Mr Davies, of Mr Foot, the official evidence of the N.U.J. and of some of its individual members confirmed expectations, though on some occasions it exceeded them: for instance, when Mr Foot expressed his preference for the *Daily Worker* over the *Daily Graphic* as a source of information. The oral evidence of some witnesses was indeed, disarmingly frank. Thus, according to Mr Davies:

'It is a well-known fact that the bulk of newspaper men are Left, and the daily newspapers are chiefly Right. There are not enough Left-wing papers to employ all the Left-wing journalism' (Q. 3544).

Mr R. J. Minney, formerly managing editor of the defunct *Sunday Referee* and earlier on the staff of the *Daily Express*, went so far as to suggest that the expression of Left-wing views was confined to some small sheets.¹ It would be interesting to know what the editors of the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Herald*, the *News Chronicle*, the *New Statesman* and *Tribune* (and perhaps the *Times*), think of this description of their papers.

Two prominent Left-wing journalists, not directly connected with the National Union of Journalists, allowed their dislike of private ownership to lead them into a very unfortunate piece of advocacy. They were Mr Hannen Swaffer and Mr Kingsley Martin, both of whom commented favourably on the so-called Czech experiment in newspaper ownership in 1945-48. Over this period the private

¹ Q. 3097.

ownership of newspapers in Czechoslovakia was prohibited and the ownership of newspapers practically confined to the four permitted political parties.¹ Mr Martin, in particular, thought this a rather good system and one which compared very favourably with American experience. Here is the gist of Mr Martin's remarks.

'All the political Parties may have newspapers except the outlawed Fascist Party; certain individuals who in the past had established themselves as particularly important journalists have been allowed to continue their newspapers; and cultural organizations can get a licence to publish a newspaper. I think that the editors under this system have as much freedom as they had under the old system, or more, in that they can attack each other, there is no dictatorship, they print news, and the Press is improved by making the right to start a newspaper subject only to licence' (Q. 3222).

It will be seen that Mr Martin did not say whether the newspapers could attack the government, nor what kind of news they could print, nor who issued the licences, nor how many parties there were and on what basis they were permitted. This particular answer and a few similar remarks led to the following exchange between Mr Ensor and Mr Martin.

'You said: "I am very much against State control of the Press", and then almost in the same breath you put before us this Czech idea of confining the right to publish a newspaper to persons who are licensed by the State?' — 'Yes.'

'You are conferring on the State, or assuming for it, the right to prevent people from publishing newspapers; the right of publication is confined to its nominees?' — 'Not nominees, categories of people.'

'The State nominates those categories?' — 'Yes' (Q. 3274).

This evidence was taken on November 27th, 1947. It was published in March 1948, about a fortnight after the Czech communists no longer found it necessary to maintain outward appearances and turned the country into an undisguised dictatorship. It had of course been such a dictatorship since 1945, but some outward trappings were maintained for the benefit of such observers as Mr Kingsley Martin.

Although there can be no doubt about the validity of the claim

¹ According to Mr. Martin (Q. 3222) all political parties had newspapers 'except the outlawed fascist party'. He omitted to say that about one-half of the pre-war parties had been outlawed and only those were allowed to function who agreed to collaborate closely with the communists.

advanced by Mr Hadyn Davies that the majority of newspapermen are to the Left rather than to the Right, it need not be thought that the extreme position taken up by spokesmen of the National Union of Journalists necessarily represents the views of the majority of journalists. Such an assumption would underestimate the resourcefulness and industry of the communists and of their allies. There is a large union with largish branches; and there is a vocal and politically active minority which dominates the administration as well as the meetings at which important resolutions are passed. The technique is familiar (or should be familiar), but it is valuable to see it so clearly set out as in the evidence of Mr A. Marshall Diston (member of the National Union of Journalists and formerly branch chairman) in Questions 700-17; and in the evidence of Mr George Edinger, the well-known free-lance, in Questions 1137-8. In the words of Mr Edinger,

'I did go to one meeting, and I was horrified to find that the entire staff of the *Daily Worker* had been given time off to pack it, so that they had a complete majority. It was a waste of time for me to go to such a meeting. I had no means as a free lance of organizing among my own friends enough people to outweigh the organized oppositions from full-time professional trade unionists of Left-wing papers' (Q. 1137).

It appears that the staff of the *Daily Worker* were always given time off to attend meetings and the same seems to apply to vocal Left-wing members of the staffs of Left-wing papers such as the *News Chronicle*.

Throughout the proceedings of the Commission there seems to have been a curiously defensive attitude on the part of those with conservative or liberal political opinions, both among the witnesses and the members of the Commission. The impression which would be derived by the casual reader is that distortion and misrepresentation are confined to the conservative press, which is on trial and has to defend itself against charges supported by the evidence of numerous witnesses. The evidence of these witnesses did not bear examination, but plausibility was lent to their attitude by the obvious unfamiliarity of some members of the Commission, as well as of conservative witnesses, with the contents of Left-wing newspapers, especially with those of the less attractive section of the Left-wing press. Thus a casual remark of a distinguished member of the Commission revealed that he had never heard of a regular column in an influential Sunday newspaper by a Member of Parliament in which the art of distortion and denigration reaches high levels, even by the exacting standards of the modern press.

4

The Royal Commission had no difficulty in disposing of the unsupported accusations and half-baked proposals of the National Union of Journalists and its supporters. But the prolonged consideration of their evidence could not fail to influence the proceedings. The accurate presentation of news was among the principal topics before the Commission. Now, this is pre-eminently a matter which cannot be considered adequately apart from the attitude of the reading public; the nature of the demands of the readers is central to this issue. But the significance of these demands is missed in the Report — largely because of preoccupation with other influences on the presentation of news, such as the part played by advertisers, the growth of the chains and the sinister figure of Lord Kemsley. The Commission might have examined the specific questions of the extent of monopoly in the British press and investigated the particular charges advanced by the National Union of Journalists; or it might have discussed on a high level the place of the press in the contemporary scene, especially its influence on public opinion. In fact it achieved a rather uninspired compromise between these two lines of approach.

The Commission's concern with what must be considered secondary issues tends to obscure an obvious fact: the British public gets the newspapers it wants to have.¹ In recent years some writers have been reluctant to face this well-founded but to them unpalatable observation, and in certain circles it is supposed that the public would welcome more high quality newspapers if only they made their appearance. This is the thesis of Wickham Steed in his well-known book *The Press* published shortly before the war. Echoes of this view can be traced in the evidence before the Commission, as well as in the somewhat pathetic attempts in the Report (especially para. 565) to suggest that there are grounds for believing that the taste and discrimination of the public is about to improve. This school of thought often argues that the high cost of starting newspapers prevents the demand from being satisfied; and the figure of two million pounds or more is frequently quoted as a minimum required to start a national paper.

But all this rests partly on misconception and partly on wishful thinking. For various reasons set out by the Commission² it is difficult to estimate closely the cost of starting a daily newspaper, but the capital cost before the war was less than one million pounds and the cost of starting a quality paper may have been under one hundred thousand pounds, especially where it was possible to have

¹ This requires slight modification in view of the present newsprint shortage but the substance remains unaffected.

² Para. 304.

the paper printed under contract. What did cost millions was the building up of a mass circulation and the necessity of carrying on at a loss for months and possibly years until a seven-figure circulation had been reached, a circulation which was thought necessary to secure sufficient advertisement revenue to make a daily paper selling at a penny a paying proposition. The enormous cost was not the cost of buying the plant, but that of buying a readership — a cost which would never have to be incurred if there had been a large unsatisfied demand for quality. There were in fact no myriads of potential readers waiting for a quality paper at twopence or threepence; this, indeed, was obvious from the unfavourable experience of the *Manchester Guardian*, from the difficulties of the sixpenny weeklies and from other subsidiary evidence. There was ample demand for entertainment combined with some news at a penny, but little evidence of an unsatisfied demand for information at twopence. As a form of entertainment the popular press offers remarkable value for money; there is no branch of the entertainment industry in the recognized sense of the term which offers a comparable amount of entertainment at anywhere near such a low price.

The rise of the popular press in the half-century or so before the recent war meant that the daily paper carried a smaller proportion of editorial matter and solid news than in the past and that more space was given to sports, features, trivial news and advertising material. As is well known, this reflected the growth in numbers of the urban population, of the middle class, lower middle class and literate working class. As city life, especially in Great Britain, the Dominions and in America, tends to be impersonal it creates a demand for vicarious personal contacts which are supplied by the wireless, the cinema and the press.¹ It is safe to say that the general character of newspapers is largely determined by the demands of their readers, and this change in the character of newspapers was only a reflection of a changed demand. The demand which determines the character of a newspaper is both positive and negative, and some acute observers have considered that the negative side of the demand is the more influential. It was a maxim of Lord Northcliffe's (quoted in the Commission's Report) that 'while it is damaging for a newspaper not to give the reader what he wants, it is far worse to give him what he does not want'.² But what is important

¹ An interesting reflection of this is to be found in the chatty, quasi-personal tone of the programme announcements of the Light Programme of the B.B.C. The fan-mails even of minor broadcasters are familiar aspects of the same phenomenon. It is recognized by the community in their use of the Christian name usually in a familiarized version as a method of address.

² The maxims and activities of Lord Northcliffe are probably still more instructive pointers to the problems of the modern press than the great bulk of

in the present situation is not merely the partial displacement of serious news and editorial comment by writing devoted to trivial but popular concerns; it is the influence which the now dominant element of a newspaper exercises upon the presentation of such news and comment as still makes its appearance. The repercussions of national events upon the fortunes of individual readers ensures a continued place for news and comment, but the quality and standard of this part of the production must not differ widely from that of the rest of the newspaper. The presentation of news and comment is pulled down to the level of the major interest of the paper; the serious is made trivial in order to be tolerated by readers who demand triviality at all costs, and even official announcements (such as changes in the scale of rations) have to be dressed up in the garments of inanity. In short, the present position is rather more degrading than if trivialities had succeeded in capturing the whole of a newspaper and serious news and comment had disappeared altogether. And the major problems of distortion and inaccuracy belong to this range of facts, and not to matters of ownership, control or management.

5

It must not be thought (as is often suggested) that the readers of mass circulation papers are excessively credulous, or that they are easily influenced directly by the press they read. The political history of Great Britain and of the United States during the inter-war period suggests strongly that the popular press cannot sway its readers very easily; indeed, particularly in the United States, people are often so conscious of propaganda that they consider as intentionally misleading all news items on a particular topic. The weaknesses of the readers of the popular press are rather different and perhaps more serious. They seem to lie rather in a lack of critical faculty (including self-criticism), lack of discernment and of intellectual self-reliance; coupled with an unwillingness or inability to sustain intellectual effort even on a very modest scale, especially an inability to concentrate on a topic for any length of time. The result is not simple credulity, but a haphazard almost random distribution of credulousness and incredulity. The conclusions reached by such readers are not the result of critical reasoning, nor are they based on traditional beliefs, but seem to spring from a few the evidence before the Royal Commission or even the Report itself. Much of this material can be found in *Northcliffe, An Intimate Biography* by Mr HAMILTON FYFE and in *My Northcliffe Diary* by Mr TOM CLARKE. Thus when Northcliffe gave instructions during the war of 1914-18 that no article in the *Daily Mail* was to exceed 300 words in length he put his finger on a problem which is still more important than most of the material published as a result of the inquiries of the Commission.

preconceived notions, not very solidly based, and from scraps of chance information acquired accidentally.¹

The craving for variety and the refusal to undertake even slight intellectual effort are particularly noteworthy. They are faithfully reflected in the selection and treatment of news in the popular press, in the extreme brevity of the leading articles ('leaderettes' as they are sometimes called) and in the fragmentation of the main news pages into headlines and items of different sizes and layout intended to provide variety rather than to emphasize differences in importance. These adverse developments in the powers of discrimination and in the intellectual stamina of the newspaper-reading public have taken place over a period during which the complexity of public issues has increased steadily and in the course of the last twenty years very rapidly indeed. But the treatment of political and public issues in the popular press (both in reporting and in editorial comment) has reflected the public demand rather than the actual complexity of events, and consequently the gap between the events and the appearance they are made to take on in the newspaper has widened. What the popular newspaper now supplies is a diabolically economical answer to the demands of literacy without education.

A somewhat analogous development seems to have taken place in the mental habits of the so-called intelligentsia, that section of the newspaper public which supports sixpenny weeklies and (less consistently) quality daily papers. Here too, there has been a noticeable failure to keep pace with the growing complexity of events, an unwillingness to undertake the required mental effort, 'a decline in intellectual carriage', in the expressive words of Mr G. M. Young. In these circles the decline was outwardly less obvious than in the public of the popular press, as it took place without such external manifestations as those visible on the pages of the popular newspapers. But it was not less real or important, and whatever may be said about the exact level from which the descent started, there can be little dispute about the standards which have now been reached; they are most clearly to be seen in the weeklies particularly favoured by the intelligentsia.

There was the well-known weekly of the intellectuals which used to tell its readers regularly from 1932 to 1937 that capitalism inevitably led to war as only thus was it possible to find a market for the products of private enterprise. But this reasoning did not prevent statements from the same source in 1938-39 that the policy of

¹ It is not easy to convey faithfully this curious process and its even more curious results. They can be seen in the correspondence columns of the popular press and of *Picture Post*. But they are perhaps most vividly experienced when listening to the comments on the contents of the morning's newspapers over the eleven o'clock cup of tea in metropolitan offices.

appeasement pursued by the Government of the day was a necessary result of government by capitalists who could not envisage a disruption of the capitalist system.¹ This same paper used to tell its readers fairly regularly that the saving habits of the wealthy were responsible for the unemployment prevailing before the war; but when the late Lord Keynes advanced his plan for compulsory saving during the war, the readers were told that the rich, by their refusal to save, had prevented every attempt at social improvement during the inter-war period. It is painful to recall the unvarying repetition of class interests as the key to all political and historical knowledge. There seemed to be no end to nonsense which supplied the demand for the favoured kind of schoolboy cleverness.² We were told that the falling birthrate in western Europe was evidence of a tendency to mass suicide induced by conditions of life under capitalism, while the birthrate in the Soviet Union reflected the inherent superiority of the communist system. A similarly high birthrate in countries like India, China and Poland was evidence of backwardness. As late as 1940 it was still popular to maintain for the benefit of this influential section of the community that Hitler and other Nazi leaders were only puppets of the German capitalists and industrialists. The tendency to over-simplification eventually reached a degree which would have appeared scarcely credible even twenty years ago. An article in one of these sixpenny weeklies seriously suggested in 1943 that the plan for a complete social reconstruction of the whole world could be drawn up on a single page.³

It must not be thought, of course, that the decay in sustained critical reasoning among the intelligentsia was confined to the Left. When in July 1939 the then Headmaster of Winchester assured his audience on Speech Day that he saw no conceivable ground for anything except optimism and hope, he was not unrepresentative of a wide section of Conservative opinion which found frequent expression in the quality press (both daily newspapers and periodicals) in 1937-39. It was mainly conservatives who contributed to a notorious correspondence in the *Times* in February to March 1939 in which the writers in effect asked not to be told unpalatable news. Most of the correspondents voiced dissatisfaction with the alarming nature of the news bulletins of the B.B.C. The complaints were not

¹ This was recalled without reference to the source by Mr G. M. Young in examining one of the witnesses before the Royal Commission.

² Some of it even got into books. 'The Reformation might be interpreted as a reaction of medieval businessmen against investment in shrines and relics', whilst 'the Renaissance or rebirth of classical learning was in fact a manoeuvre by the bankers and merchants to fortify their newly gained position with new cultural defenses'. Dr J. G. CROWTHER, *Social Relationships of Science*.

³ It must be stated in fairness, however, that the size of the page was not specified.

of political bias or of untruthfulness; they were chiefly concerned with the disquieting nature of the information. One writer complained that the bulletins were not good for young people, and according to a master at Eton, his sleep was apt to be disturbed by listening to them.¹ The letters reflected an avowed desire by people of standing and influence, to be kept ill-informed of the political situation. A few weeks later demands for a restraint on the publication of disturbing news were supported in important public speeches. In these demands too, the emphasis was on the disturbing nature of the news and not on the tendentiousness of the reports.

6

The refusal to examine far-reaching and complex issues with a measure of moral and intellectual courage seems to be widespread and is evidently not confined either to readers of the popular press or to conservative businessmen or to Left-wing intellectuals, though the so-called intelligentsia generally seem to be among the worst offenders. The underlying factors cannot be analysed here, but unless the existence of this deep-seated and widespread *malaise* is realized, the difficulties in the way of accurate presentation of the news in newspapers cannot be grasped.

The root of the matter lies in the difficulty of presenting a picture of what is often an exceedingly complex situation to a reading public unwilling or unable to sustain even a very modest intellectual effort. The newspaper if it is to survive must interest its reader; and this applies to all the material in the paper, which consequently must exhibit a certain homogeneity corresponding to the level of interest to be engaged. The demand is for a presentation which is frequently, and perhaps generally, so over-simplified and discontinuous that the difference between it and mere travesty is often very small. Even writers of great skill, and with a thorough understanding of the implications of the news items before them, would often be unable to present these in a form both undistorted and simple enough for the reader to read willingly and understand easily. And the great majority of the editorial staffs do not possess these qualifications.

The point may be put in another way. As is well known, facts do not speak for themselves nor is it possible to present all the facts of a situation. Often, indeed usually, a full and objective report or comment is highly selective. But it is possible to obtain a balanced picture of a situation even from a selective account if critical reason-

¹ Very shortly after this correspondence was closed the Germans occupied Bohemia on March 14th-15th which occasioned a spectacular newspaper blunder. *Punch*, in its issue of March 15th, 1939, showed a full-page cartoon under the heading 'The Ides of March' with John Bull awakening to see the shadows of crisis disappearing from his room. The caption read, 'Scaremongers have predicted another crisis for March 15th'.

ing is exercised, if some idea is formed of the basis on which the facts presented have been selected, and if these are related to previously reported events — in short, if these facts are placed in context. If, however, the reader is without the critical faculty, and particularly if he is unable to place events in any context, or does so in an oversimplified or irrelevant manner, then it is not possible to present him with a reasonable picture; his work cannot be done for him. The recurrent clamour for more and more facts is the reflection of the failure to analyse the considerable factual information already available; and perhaps it reflects also the belief that if more facts were available the reader would be spared the unpleasant task of criticism and analysis. If the reader does not undertake the effort, and is actually resentful if he is reminded of this necessity, the press will respond to the refusal and will present news and editorial comment in the required form.

The Royal Commission did not, of course, overlook such obvious considerations as the necessary elements of selectivity in the presentation of news, and the range of interests of the readers of the popular dailies. But it does not seem to have analysed (and its Report certainly does not give sufficient emphasis to) the interaction between the reader and his newspapers or the difficulty of adequate presentation of complex issues to an unwilling public. And its failure to do so seems to spring not so much from an inadequate grasp of the essentials of the situation,¹ as from the misleading terms of reference and the unfortunate necessity of investigating the charges raised by the N.U.J. and its supporters which absorbed an altogether undue amount of time, space and energy.

But the Commission's treatment of some of the matters which it investigated seems to show not merely an insufficient, but a misplaced emphasis. Facts and trends which can be expressed numerically received altogether undue prominence compared with some far more important considerations which cannot be so presented. Nothing new or interesting emerges from the extended discussion of such matters as the proportion of space allotted to Government and Opposition speakers in a particular debate by different newspapers, or of the proportion of space devoted to different by-election candidates. The conclusions are obvious and the remarks commonplace. But what is more serious is that concern with these matters diverted the attention of the Commission from less easily measurable facts which are no less real and much more important.

The performance of the Press is examined at length in Appendix VII, in which the treatment of four political news items by different

¹ Two of its members have emphasized this matter in similar or closely related contexts, and have written on it with great distinction.

newspapers is reviewed. These were issues in which the accuracy of the news reported could be established very easily against numerical standards; indeed this is why these issues were selected. No conclusion emerges from this review which would not have been obvious beforehand. But it serves to obscure more important and insidious forms of misrepresentation and distortion, the analysis of which is far more troublesome than that of the examples reviewed by the Commission. Yet from the point of view of wider political issues only misrepresentation over a much longer period is likely to be really dangerous. The Commission might more profitably have examined the methods by which an influential section of the press has succeeded in engendering the belief among a substantial proportion of the population (particularly the younger age groups) that between the wars the economic life of this country presented a general picture of almost unrelieved decay, falling wages, a low and declining standard of living, with unemployment affecting the majority of the working population. This type of distortion is by all reasonable standards far more influential and important than the instances examined by the Commission even though it does not lend itself to tabulation, calculation and the application of statistical techniques. And by implicitly identifying importance with measurability the Commission encouraged an error of judgment which is already regrettably widespread. If the Commission felt that analysis of the more insidious type of distortion was impossible for technical or political reasons it should at least have refrained from implying that the comparatively simple cases it chose for investigation adequately represent the problems created by misrepresentation and distortion. The effort and space absorbed by these issues necessarily carry that implication; Appendix VII accounts for one-third of Cmd. 7700.

The treatment by the Commission of the familiar problem of the separation of news from views also leaves something to be desired. The Commission accepted the criterion of C. P. Scott (though without actually quoting the maxim) of the sanctity of fact and the freedom of comment. The distinction is valuable if it is not pushed too far; some instances of misrepresentation quoted in the Report are unambiguous mis-statements of fact. But unfortunately once again over-emphasis of the obvious deficiency obscures the more fundamental difficulty. The presentation of every situation implies selection and this is often a matter of opinion; moreover the impact on the reader is governed considerably by the treatment of other events, even if this particular situation is reported intelligently and fairly.¹

¹ Consider the following instance. A report appears prominently in the press, supplemented with indignant comment, that a small party of journalists

Consideration of the interests of the newspaper-reading public may lead, and indeed has led, to two opposed conclusions about the influence of the press on its readers and on public opinion generally. It might be thought that since the readers are notoriously lacking in critical faculty on public issues, the press would be able to sway them very considerably and influence their views and votes easily. Conversely it might be thought that, as most newspapers are principally bought for entertainment value, their political influence would be very small. Both these views were represented in the evidence before the Commission.

The view is clearly untenable that the popular dailies can successfully influence directly the opinion of their readers. The success of the Labour Party in the General Election of 1929, the spectacular victories of President Roosevelt in four presidential elections and the repeated defeats of the press lords at the hands of the late Lord Baldwin, are familiar instances of the failure of the popular press to influence public opinion even where newspapers with an overwhelming majority of total circulation supported a particular policy. In some respects the results of the British General Election of 1945 also point in this direction. Thus the strength of the Kemsley press in certain areas did not prevent the Labour Party from sweeping the board there; but for various reasons this instance is not so conclusive as the others mentioned, especially since the national press was rather evenly divided. In general, however, the failure of the large dailies to exercise direct influence has in recent years led to growing general scepticism about the political influence of the press. It does not, however, follow from these fiascos that the press does not influence political public opinion.

There is, in the first place, an important indirect influence. By suggesting that most political issues can be adequately discussed in fifty- or sixty-word leaders it misleads its half-educated public. It fosters a superficial habit of mind and by so doing it probably exercises an important long-term influence. It reinforces prevailing mental habits, and to their own satisfaction justifies the intellectual indolence of its readers. But further, although many of their readers buy newspapers primarily for entertainment and are not much interested in public affairs, they are bound to realize, however from a democratic country had been arrested in a totalitarian country and released after a day's detention. As the prevailing state of affairs in that country has not been the subject of much previous comment, the reader is likely to draw the inference that matters cannot be so bad there as is sometimes maintained if such a comparatively minor incident becomes the subject of considerable comment and indignation. This example is not purely imaginary and applies to incidents which occurred both before the war in Germany and recently in Russian-controlled areas.

vaguely, that their individual fortunes are considerably affected by political and economic events and by Governmental decisions. Accordingly they can be expected to turn intermittently to those parts of the paper which contain information and comment on such matters, without of course examining these critically. If a certain point of view is consistently found there, presented in a congenially simple form, and not seriously out of harmony with the habitual climate of opinion in which the reader finds himself, then the intermittent encounter with this view is likely considerably to impress him. To be successful this method requires consistency over a long period and simplicity of exposition. The reader is not likely to concentrate his attention sufficiently to be much influenced by one or two closely reasoned presentations of the argument, but he may be successfully assailed by repeated small doses of a simple point of view.

The discovery of the profound effect of simplified and repetitive exposition is one reason (there are others as well) for the growing and apparently effective reliance of the British press on denigration. Abuse, with or without the support of cartoons, is of course as old as political elections. But the persistent use of denigration, at times violent and at times less outspoken but equally purposeful and calculated, by a substantial section of the press seems to be a comparatively novel feature of British public life. But there has been a noticeable growth in the last fifteen years in the use of this technique of establishing a particular climate of opinion by discrediting certain classes and sections of the community, or particular institutions and modes of living and so forth. The methods employed were often very similar to those of some Continental papers, notably that of *Das Schwarze Korps* and *Gringoire*; and a comparison in the course of 1942-43 of the cartoons of the former with those in some British newspapers shows interesting similarity in technique and general approach. This is not a topic on which more can be said here, but it is probable that a detailed study of this technique as exhibited in the cartoons of the *News Chronicle*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Worker* and in the columns of *Reynolds News*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Worker*, the *New Statesman* and *Tribune* in the years 1936-48 would prove rewarding. It would seem that the proved failures of the popular press to influence public opinion on particular occasions may have led observers to underestimate the influence on public opinion of certain types of journalism which seek ends which are far more important than successful intervention in specific instances. This kind of influence, moreover, is likely to show a secular increase, since the growing complexity of affairs and the strong tendency towards further specialization are likely to enhance the reliance of the public on those who can provide it not merely with easily digestible,

plausible accounts of a variety of situations, but also with an oversimple point of view which makes otherwise negligible distortions of fact important.

8

The Commission investigated at length the alleged influence of advertisers on news reporting and editorial comment. The sinister influence of these was a principal concern of the critics of the press in the 1930s and was a major burden of the argument in Mr Wickham Steed's book on the press. Mr Wickham Steed blamed the advertisers for the performance of the popular press in 1938-39, when in the face of ample evidence to the contrary the newspapers continued to maintain that all was well in the international sphere and that there was no real ground for anxiety. Referring to the treatment of a notorious speech of Hitler's in the popular press, Mr Wickham Steed said:

Inquiry into this humiliating behaviour on the part of our 'free press' elicited the information that certain large advertising agents had warned journals for which they provided much revenue that advertisements would be withheld from them should they 'play up' the international crisis and cause an alarm which was 'bad for trade'. None of the newspapers then warned dared to publish the names of these advertisement agents or to hold them up for public contempt.

This was a surprising statement to put forward in view of the contemporary attitude of the public which, we have seen, went a long way towards a demand not to be alarmed or upset: the alleged pressure of the advertisers would seem to have been a work of supererogation. But the Commission inquired specially into this allegation and found no evidence for it whatever. And other vague general accusations of the distorting influence of the advertisers remained equally unsubstantiated.

There is, of course, an important indirect influence in that the need to secure advertising revenue requires the production of a newspaper in a form and with contents which appeal to millions of readers. This however is simply an aspect, though an important one, of the influence of the readers on the newspapers and a further example how the people get the newspapers they want.

Although the Commission was critical of much it found in the work of the press — notably excessive political bias, sensationalism, frequent misrepresentation — it nevertheless introduces its conclusions with the following remark:

It is generally agreed that the British press is inferior to none in the world.

This may surprise those who know the Swiss press, which comprises at least six quality newspapers, as informative as any in this country if not more so, and at least one weekly greatly superior to any weekly paper in this country. Perhaps this conclusion may have been based on the collapse of the evidence of the National Union of Journalists and its allies. But it does not take account of those very serious deficiencies of the press which flow from the weakness of the reading public.

The Commission puts forward a number of recommendations for improving the performance of the press. The most prominent is a suggestion for the establishment of a General Council of the Press. This body is to review developments likely to restrict the supply of information; concern itself with the methods of recruitment and the training of journalists; censure undesirable forms of conduct; and so forth. There are a few minor recommendations, including a recommendation for conferring certain powers of inquiry on the Registrar of Friendly Societies in respect of societies registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts which publish newspapers and periodicals. Newspapers at present owned by such societies include the *Daily Worker* and *Reynolds News*.

The recommendation for a General Council of the Press was not unexpected since most commissions or committees which have inquired into an industry in the course of the last few years have suggested that their work should be continued by another body. It is, however, doubtful whether the proposed Council would achieve much that is worthwhile. There would be an obvious difficulty in the recruitment of suitable personnel. Either the members would comprise largely men of second-rate ability (though they may be well known) in which case its work would be of little value; it would only add to the output of print embodying the results of superficial thought and imperfectly digested material. If the Council comprised first-class ability, the harm would be greater, since such men are very scarce and should not be withdrawn from more important activities, especially writing. But there is ground for more fundamental criticism. The recommendations miss the root causes of the defects of the modern press; and as they refer to secondary, or indeed minor aspects of the trouble, they serve to obscure the more important factors at work. The most charitable inference is that in its proposals, not less than in the course of its inquiry, the Commission was handicapped by the misdirection of attention involved in its terms of reference. What the Commission suggested certainly has the advantage of being practical, but it has also the disadvantage of being off the target.

THE JEW AND THE GENERAL

A Study in Diasporean Humour

SIEGBERT PRAWER

A stupid *Butt* is only fit for the Conversation of ordinary people; Men of Wit require one that will give them Play, and bestir himself in the absurd Part of his Behaviour.

ADDISON, *Spectator* 47

I

ONE of the early features of Streicher's anti-Jewish weekly *Der Stürmer* was a regular column of jokes such as Jews delight to tell about themselves. Streicher reprinted stories about physical uncleanliness, about adultery, about the ridiculous side of Jewish observances — and solemnly declared these to prove that Jews were naturally unclean, lecherous, and contemptuous of all spiritual values, even those embodied in their own religion. It was as though a foreign observer were to draw conclusions about the normal behaviour of Englishmen by examining the postcards of Donald McGill.

But comic seaside postcards, though they do not accurately reflect the behaviour and outlook of those who take pleasure in them, nevertheless fulfil, as Mr George Orwell has brilliantly shown, a most important purpose. They serve as a safety-valve for repressed instincts, as a windlass for slackening tensions, as a back door through which the 'cowardly debt-bilking adulterer' who lurks within even the most heroic of us can find an outlet. And this is exactly the function fulfilled, in a slightly different way, by the Jewish Joke.

A distinction must here be made. We cannot include among 'Jewish jokes' such stories as are told about Jews by men of a different faith. 'The jokes about Jews made up by non-Jews', declares Freud (in *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*), 'are nearly all brutal buffooneries in which the wit is saved by the fact that the Jew appears a comic figure to a stranger.' Only stories invented by Jews about their co-religionists are here to be considered. Such jokes represent a revolt against authority and restraint; and an attempt to relax tensions inevitably set up by life in the Diaspora (Dispersion).

The many stories in which Jews portray other Jews as unclean provide a simple, indeed a crude, illustration. There is no religious code which lays such stress on physical cleanliness as that of Israel. Regular washings, as part of religious ritual, are strictly enjoined in the Talmud. 'It is better', declares one of the Rabbis, 'to live in a

town that has no synagogue, than in one without a bath-house.' And John Locke, wishing to encourage regular ablutions among his own countrymen, wrote as early as 1690: 'If the rivers of Italy are warmer, those of Germany and Poland are much colder than any in this our country; and yet in these *the Jews, both men and women, bathe all over, at all seasons of the year*, without any prejudice to their health.' But where there is a strict command there is also much conscious or unconscious rebellion; a rebellion of our lazy self which, checked in real life, finds its outlet in the Jewish Joke.

This explains the joke at its most vulgar: the greeting of one man meeting the other outside the bath house: 'So another year has passed'; or the even less savoury call of a husband to his wife, as both prepare to attend a Subscription Ball: 'You can't go to the ball like this! Either you dress higher up, or you wash lower down.'

Here we have also our explanation of the unethical nature of so much of Jewish humour: a feature seized upon by Streicher and other anti-semites to prove Jewish unconsciousness of moral obligations. In reality, of course, it proves the very opposite. 'Judaism', writes one of the great Rabbis of modern times, 'is not merely ethical; ethics constitute its principle, its essence.' The conception of an absolute moral law, originating from a God worshipped only by righteous actions on this earth, lies at the root of Jewish monotheism. The life of the professing Jew is therefore dominated by a series of moral obligations *to which there is no end*. 'One duty', we read in the *Sayings of the Fathers*, 'creates another'; or again: 'The reward of (obeying) a command is another command.'

But as always, the Falstaff, the Sancho Panza, the earthy, cowardly or adulterous part of us rebels, and finds an outlet in jokes which seem flatly to deny (as some of the stories quoted below will amply confirm) the validity of any kind of moral law. The teller of such jokes, like Coleridge's comic poet, 'idealizes his characters by making the animal the governing power and the intellectual (and, I would add, the moral) the mere instrument'.¹

The Jewish sages call this lower, animal side of man's nature the 'Yetzer ha-raa'; and there exists a remarkable Rabbinic comment on a passage in Genesis which is immediately relevant here. We read in the first chapter of Genesis, verse 31: 'And God saw everything He had made, and behold, it was very good.' The *Midrash*, or commentary, includes in the verdict 'very good' the yetzer ha-raa —

¹ cf. the remark of a character in Mr T. S. Eliot's 'Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry' on the 'impeccable' morality of English Restoration drama: 'It assumes orthodox Christian morality, and laughs (in its Comedy) at human nature for not living up to it. It retains its respect for the divine by showing the failure of the human. The attitude of Restoration drama towards morality is like the attitude of the Blasphemer towards Religion. It is only the irreligious who are shocked by blasphemy. Blasphemy is a sign of Faith,' *Selected Essays*, p. 45.

man's evil impulses, his lower nature. Is then the yetzer ha-raa very good? The Rabbi answers: 'Were it not for the yetzer ha-raa, the lower primitive desires, a man would neither build a house, nor marry a wife, nor seek gain of trade, nor continue to propagate his kind, so that the world would not be upheld.' 'Had it not been for the sin of early man,' adds another Rabbi, 'the world of men would have been angelic and would thus never have increased its inhabitants, for angels neither die nor propagate their kind.' That is to say: Man's lower instincts lead to higher ends. There is a place for the yetzer ha-raa, and for its most delightful and harmless expression, the Jewish Joke, in the Jewish scheme of things.

2

This, then, is the first of the tensions reproduced, and momentarily relieved, in the Jewish Joke: the tension between a strict and unending 'Thou Shalt' and the more disreputable of human instincts. But there is another kind of stress and strain, set up by life in the Diaspora, of which we must be conscious if we would adequately respond to these frail and ephemeral, and yet so significant, creations of Jewish wit.

Jews have always found it possible, when unimpeded by the hostility of others, to remain loyal to their own civilization while directing their energies into the service of whatever country granted them citizenship. Philo explained that he looked on Jerusalem as his *mother-city*, accounting the country in which he lived, and in which his parents had lived before him, his *father-land*. No conflict of loyalties is possible in such a view. 'Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Nevertheless, psychological difficulties inevitably resulted. The hostility of Christian or Moslem neighbours, and a consequent sensation of failure to fit in, of being accepted as equal — even after nominal emancipation — only *de jure* and not *de facto*, created tensions felt in the life of every Jew in the Diaspora. Father and mother, to use Philo's terms, lived at enmity. And from these tensions the joke again afforded some measure of relief.

Here is a story typical of those current in pre-Hitler Germany.

In the course of a train-journey a lieutenant unwraps his provisions. 'May I offer you a ham-sandwich?' he politely asks the only other occupant of his compartment.

'I am afraid I must decline. I am Jewish, and am not allowed to eat ham.'

The officer uncorks a bottle. 'Perhaps a glass of wine?'

'Thank you, no. Even here we distinguish between "kosher" and "non-kosher".'

'But what if you were dying of thirst?'

'That would alter the case. In mortal danger dietary regulations cease to be binding.'

The lieutenant draws his sword. 'Now drink up, or I'll run you through the body!'

His Jewish fellow-traveller drains the glass to the last drop, and the journey continues in embarrassed silence. After a while, the lieutenant apologizes:

'I am sorry, I have gone a little too far — I do hope you are not angry with me.'

'Angry? Of course I'm angry! Why didn't you draw your sword when you offered me the ham?'

The strain which produced this story should be, after what has already been said, sufficiently obvious. Many Jews, feeling that as Jews they were not welcome in Gentile society, inevitably experienced a strong desire for *complete assimilation to the non-Jewish way of life* such as is shown by our story. Non-humorous documents attesting the same urge exist in plenty, notably Jakob Wassermann's widely read autobiography, *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*. In real life, Jewish loyalties (loyalty to the mother as well as the father) were in most cases strong enough to counterbalance this desire and thereby to create serious tensions — especially since many believed, with Ludwig Lewisohn, that assimilationism would not help to combat anti-Jewish feelings; that any 'attempt to obliterate the differences would but render the aggressor fiercer and the persecuted more defenceless'. Such resistance, the resistance of Jewish loyalty, is conquered — in a characteristically devious way, in which the onus of transgression is thrown on the non-Jew — by the protagonist of our joke. Assimilatory desires are given free rein, and relieving laughter results.

The problem of adaptation to an often strange and hostile world is also raised, and solved, in one of the most famous of Jewish stories. A wealthy Jewish immigrant came to Harvard University to enter his son as a student. He was especially anxious to have him taught to speak English correctly. 'I want him taught the way you spigg here,' he said, 'and I want you should take him in hand yourself and give him brivate instructions.' 'Well,' said the Harvard professor of English, speaking with a large cultivated accent, 'I shall certainly be glad to do so. We rather flatter ourselves here on our English.'

The father went away and returned a few months later.

'Vell,' he asked, 'and how is my boy getting on mid his English?'

'Oh,' said the professor, 'he is megging brogress, goot brogress. I togg mid him myself effery day.'

This joke presents us with a Jew who has found it difficult to adapt himself — in his speech — to the ways of the Gentile world around

him. But the originator of the joke did not want to be 'different': he imagined therefore a state of affairs in which the normal process is reversed, in which the world (symbolized by the professor) adapts itself to the Jew. The strain of living in the Diaspora is relieved in a wish-dream world, incongruous but desirable.

With this characteristically Western European group should be contrasted a group of jokes from Eastern Europe, which also confronts (like our first story) a Gentile army officer and a Jew as fellow-travellers in a railway carriage. For obvious reasons, Jews within the ghettos of the Pale of Settlement could not develop the strong desire for complete assimilation which characterized their Western co-religionists: but they too felt the strain of living in an alien and hostile world, and had to find some way of relieving it.

In a railway carriage in Czarist Russia a general, sitting opposite a Jew, makes his dog perform all sorts of tricks. 'Moishe (i.e., Moses)', he calls to it, 'stand on your hind-legs! Moishe, fetch this newspaper! Moishe, jump over this stick!' Then, turning to the Jew: 'Well, Yid, how do you like my dog?' 'He's very clever,' answers his fellow-traveller; 'if you hadn't given him a Jewish name, he would now be a general.'

Here the differences are maintained, neither side assimilating to the other. But the Jewish protagonist, with whom we are asked to identify ourselves, demonstrates his intellectual superiority over the bullying Gentile; and we experience therefore that 'sudden glory from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others' which Hobbes designated as the cause of all laughter. The joke affords compensation to the underdog, and thereby relief from strain.¹

The tension between mother-city and fatherland becomes particularly interesting when transferred into the very heart of the Jewish world: when the protagonists of the joke are not, as hitherto, a Jew and Gentile, but a Jew who has remained faithful to the religion and culture of his fathers and another who abandons or neglects them. It is usually, in such cases, with the former that the story-teller identifies himself, that he scores a Hobbesian triumph.

'Daddy, how old do you have to be before you become a Jew?'

'Don't ask such silly questions; you are what you are, age has nothing to do with it.'

'Oh yes, it has! I am twelve years old, and I am a Protestant;

¹ Western Jews, as the following story will illustrate, have a far more devious way of coming to grips, in their jokes, with the unpleasant fact of antisemitism.

The children of Christian and Jewish tenants of a block of flats always played together in perfect amity. One day, however, the Christian children refused further association: 'Daddy told us you are Jews, you killed our Saviour.'

Little Sammy: 'My word of honour, we didn't do it! It must have been Cohens next door.'

you are forty, and you are *still* a Protestant; but grandpa is sixty-five, and he is *already* a Jew.'

Or witness — a less extreme instance, this — the question of the little Jewish boy overjoyed at receiving gifts at Christmas time (Jews are of course forbidden to celebrate the birth of the Christian Saviour):

'Mummy, do the goim (Gentiles) celebrate Christmas too?'

It is however gratifying and, as will be pointed out, significant, to see that the other side also scores its occasional triumph.

'Your son has been baptized? And you have let it happen? What will you say to the Almighty when He asks you on the Day of Judgment: "Hirsch, how could you allow your son to become a Christian?"'

'I shall answer: "And *Your* son?"'

It is the convert's easy-going father — though not, characteristically, the convert himself — who has laughter and sympathy on his side.

3

The Jewish Joke, as we have seen, affords relief from the tensions set up by the relations between Jew and non-Jew; it does so through the creation of a wish-dream world in which such tension is relaxed, through giving vent to assimilatory desire, or through giving free rein to aggression. But as our last examples have already shown, it is not only from the relations between Gentile and Jew that strains and stresses result. There are also groups, classes and factions *within Jewry itself* whose aims and interests tend to conflict; and such conflicts too are recognized, and for a time resolved, in our jokes.

When considering the attitude of Jew to Jew we must keep in mind above all the intensity of Jewish individualism. 'When a man stamps coins from one die,' we read in the Talmud, 'they are all alike; but the Holy One, blessed be He, stamped all men with the die of Adam, and yet no man is quite like his fellow. Wherefore each human being has the right to say that he is the end and goal of all creation.' And the proverb says: Where there are two Jews, there are three opinions. Such individualism naturally creates tensions. Each man wishes, on the one hand, to assert his own self (yetzer ha-raa and all) against that of others, to consider only — since he is 'the end and goal of all creation' — his own comforts without regard for those of his fellows. He must recognize, on the other hand, that his neighbour is just as much goal of creation as himself, and that his neighbour may therefore make claims as valid as his own. This tension is at the root of a group of jokes of which the following is a fair example.

In Levy's Restaurant, during a heat-wave, a guest takes off his jacket, collar and tie. The proprietor reproaches him:

'Mr. Solomons, what would they say if you behaved like this in the *Trocaadero*?'

'But I have done it in the *Trocaadero*! They came to me and said "Mr. Solomons, if you want to do this sort of thing, you must go to *Levy's*".'

The company of non-Jews restrains the epic protagonist of this story from taking his ease in his inn, without regard for the susceptibilities of others; but among his fellow Jews he feels justified in asserting his individuality by obeying the promptings of his lower self. It is notable that the voice of this lower self, as in the story of the officer and the ham-sandwich, is that of the *Gentile*: a sublimation of the 'Yetzer ha-raa' whose significance requires no comment.

With the strong individualism already noted another factor obviously combines: the Jewish sense of the fundamental equality of all members of the community, as indeed of all men. 'Another reason', continues the Talmud passage quoted above, 'why God created only one primal man is for the sake of peace and democracy, so that no one may say: "My ancestry is better than yours."' The ancient Jewish attitude to Kingship demonstrates the same egalitarianism; Deuteronomy xvii, 20, seeks to ensure 'that (the King's) heart be not lifted up above *his brethren*'. And this governs also the relation of the Jewish rich and the Jewish poor. 'The Jew today in the slums of our great cities', wrote even Hilaire Belloc, 'has kept intact a sense of equality *which is coincident with the feeling of human dignity* [my italics] . . .; and the Jewish millionaire does not, like *our* rich men, mistake his wealth for excellence, nor do his fellow-Jews think him the greater for it, but only the more fortunate.'

In one important respect this account of the relations between the poor and the rich is oversimplified. Jews have never developed an aristocracy (other than that of learning): the possession of money represents the only social distinction between one man and the next. The distinction acquires therefore considerable importance. While the poor Jew feels himself in one way the equal of the rich, in another he is conscious of a great gulf — and again a dichotomy appears which the Joke can recognize and overcome.

It is this which accounts for a most characteristic phenomenon: the story confronting a Jewish millionaire and a *Shnorrer* (Jewish mendicant).

(a) A *Shnorrer* demands admittance to Rothschild's inner sanctum. He is so clamorous that he is at last admitted.

'Well, what do you want?'

'I want to tell you how you can save £20,000.'

'What?'

'You have a daughter of marriageable age?'

'Yes.'

'And you are giving her a dowry of £40,000?'

'Yes.'

'Give her to me — I will take her with £20,000.'

(b) *Shnorrer*: 'I have come to claim a contribution. Since you are rich and I am poor, I hope you will suppress any inclination to be stingy, and give me . . .'

Rothschild: 'I am afraid I must interrupt you. That is not the tone to adopt when appealing to my generosity.'

Shnorrer (offended): 'Well, if you understand *shnorring* (begging) better than I do, why don't *you* go and do it?'

In both these stories, egalitarianism triumphs. The *Shnorrer* like the baron has his place — an equal place — in society. In the first story, he sees himself as an eminently suitable son-in-law for Rothschild; in the second he resents as unwarrantable interference, as an insult to his professional pride, the baron's attempt to dictate to him how to go about his job. The complex attitude we have seen to obtain in real life has been replaced by a simple and unequivocal one. 'Psychic expenditure' is saved, and laughter results.

But yet another factor intervenes to complicate, in real life, the relations of Jewish beggar and Jewish baron. One of the three pillars of Judaism is Charity; and the obligation to give to the poor is everywhere and always enjoined on the rich. 'He who says, what is mine is mine, and what is thine is thine, has a character like that of Sodom' (Talmud). 'Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and her daughters, *neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy*' (Ezekiel xvi, 48). This obligation helps us to understand a story such as the following:

Shnorrer: 'My nerves are bad and the doctor has told me to go to the sea-side. Would you give me something towards it?'

Rothschild: 'All right, here are five pounds — go in God's name.'

Shnorrer. 'Five pounds? That's not enough for a trip to Ostende.'

Rothschild: 'What? Ostende? Must a *Shnorrer* like you go to the most expensive bathing-place of them all?'

Shnorrer: 'Mr. Rothschild — for my health nothing is too expensive.'

The beggar's last reply, when literally translated from the original Judaeo-German, reads: 'For my health nothing is *to me* too expensive.' To me. The ethical dative shows that the *Shnorrer* is treating the rich man's money as his own; the point of the joke being that in a way the money *is* his own. The rich man is obliged to dispense charity, and should, strictly, be grateful to the beggar for affording him an opportunity of doing so. The butt-hero of the joke simplifies life, substitutes an unequivocal for a complex attitude. He acts as though the religious ideal of Charity were not at

loggerheads with everyday commercial reality. Tension, as always, is relaxed.

Perhaps the largest group of jokes treating inter-Jewish relations is that dealing with the preliminaries and realities of marriage. Here again it is impossible to savour the joke to the full unless we remain conscious of the strength of Jewish feelings about the sanctity of marriage and family life; a strength recently recognized in as unlikely a place as the Kinsey Report. These feelings represent the pressure from which release is obtained; they are the resistance to be conquered by the yetzer ha-raa. For obvious reasons I refrain from introducing examples at this point: but an important subgroup, the *Shadchen* (marriage-agent) jokes, will be briefly dealt with at a later stage.

4

What distinguishes these stories treating relations between Jews from similar stories purveyed by non-Jews, is an unmistakable air of affection for, of solidarity with, the butt of the joke. Eastern or Western Jew, faithful or convert, beggar or baron — one part of us sympathized with his point of view, recognized his claims. That is why we almost invariably find that the dupe of one joke gets his own back in another. There should be, in our attitude to the subject of these jokes, something of that duality of feeling which Höffding ascribed to the spectator of high comedy: 'A duality of feeling where the worth of the object is recognized beneath its littleness. In one and the same instance, a double standard is applied.' The result is a melancholy flavour characteristic of all Jewish humour. 'When an object', says Joubert in *Traité du Ris*, 'at once pleasant with drollery and sad with ugliness presents itself, the heart is stirred very quickly and unevenly, because it wishes to make, at the same time, two contrary movements, the one of joy, the other of sorrow.' The Jewish wit regards the Jewish comedy with one auspicious and one dropping eye, because — with melancholy amusement — he recognizes in the butt of his joke an essential part of himself

And that leads us back to the most violent stress and strain of them all, that with which we began: the tug of war, not (as hitherto) between two factions in the outside world, but between two souls in each man's breast.

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,
Die eine will sich von der andern trennen.

Society requires of us a very fine balance between the business self and the private self, between egoist self and altruist self, between (using the terms in their non-philosophical connotation) idealist self and materialist self. Alertness and adaptability are the pre-

requisites of any kind of social life. One of our selves is always slighted at the expense of the other: and a strain results from which the joke may again afford temporary relief.

Three stories may help to show how Jewish wit deals with this general human situation.

(a) *The Doctor*, on his ward-round: 'Well, how did it go tonight?'

Male Nurse Smith: 'The patient was very restless, his temperature varied from 97° to 101°, his breathing was irregular, I applied compresses continually but could not induce the patient to go to sleep.'

The next day Smith is off duty, and his place taken by another male nurse. Again the doctor, on his round, asks how things have gone.

Male Nurse Cohen: 'Lord, doctor — what a night have I had!'

(b) An irate client storms into the house of the *Shadchen* (marriage agent): 'Fine information you have given me! You told me the father of the girl I am to marry was no longer alive — and now I hear that he's been in jail for the last three years.'

Shadchen: 'Well, tell me — can you call that *a life*?'

(c) Four months after his eightieth birthday, a stockbroker is stricken down with influenza. His friends try to encourage him: 'Don't worry, you'll pull through all right, God won't take you till you are ninety.'

Stockbroker: 'Why should he take me at 90, if He can have me at 80½?'

What these three jokes have in common is that business principles, methods and concepts invade a sphere in which they normally have no place. One of our selves — characteristically, in the Jewish Joke of the Diaspora, the business self — has completely outweighed the others in situations where in real life a fine balance would be necessary.

Thus, in the business world of private enterprise, every man stands for himself, is out for his own profit; his own profit, if made in legal ways, redounds at the same time to the good of the community. But in nursing, things are different: it is the patient, the other man, who must be considered first, our own comfort is immaterial. The Jewish male nurse of our first story has taken up an inappropriately business-like attitude to his profession, has not felt that need to adjust oneself which society induces in the rest of us.

The conduct of the *Shadchen* in the second story may be similarly explained. There are innumerable *Shadchen* jokes, but their principle is nearly always the same. They turn, like our example, on the application of *sharp* business-practice, of the maxim *caveat emptor*, to what should be a sphere immune from it, the sphere of love and marriage. The marriage agent takes no stock of emotional complications: if bride and bridegroom treat love as a business-matter

and put themselves in his hands, they get no more than they deserve when they find they have made a bad bargain.

That the third story has a similar mechanism is easily seen. Its stockbroker hero recreates his maker in his own image: he applies business concepts to the religious world. Like the protagonists of the other stories, he is so wrapped up in his own business world that he is unable to think in terms of any other. Life, generally complicated and bewildering, lived at several levels, has been simplified in the joke.

There is no need to detail all the humours of this Jewish comedy, for our last examples should have served to indicate its essential nature.

Some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits and his powers
In their confluxions, all to run one way.

One humour, one quality, one self predominates in the 'hero' of such jokes; he has no need to maintain the balance our daily life requires of all of us. We find him amusing, but secretly we envy him. In identifying ourselves with the male nurse, the marriage agent and the stockbroker, we may find relief from the tensions of a society such as ours.

It is of course difficult to take pleasure in the most characteristic Jewish jokes without having experienced in our own life the specific tensions they momentarily relax. All too easily an unsympathetic ear may distort these stories: because the hearer may fail to grasp their essential melancholy, may misunderstand their tolerant attitude towards the cheerful and unrepentant sinner, may misinterpret the self-irony which colours them, he may well do inadvertently what was deliberately done by Streicher. But to a world such as ours, where life for Jews and non-Jews alike is tense and uncertain, the humour of the Jewish Diaspora should make an easy appeal. The darker and more oppressive the world, the more complicated existence, the greater also the need for *Galgenhumor* and the escape it provides. And here the Jew, who has had longer experience of darkness and oppression than the rest of the world, may show the way to the general.

An army officer, we are told, ordered a pair of trousers from a Jewish tailor. Twelve months elapsed before the garment was delivered.

The officer complained: 'God created the world in six days: but it took you twelve months to make one pair of trousers.'

'That's true,' replied the tailor, 'but just look at these trousers — and then take another look at the world.'

ROBERT GROSSETESTE AND THE ORIGINS OF ENGLISH EMPIRICISM

A. C. CROMBIE

ROBERT GROSSETESTE¹ dominates science in western Christendom in the early thirteenth century for two reasons. He united in his own work two tendencies which had previously been somewhat independent of each other, namely the experimental habit found in the practical techniques, and the habit of rational explanation which had developed in the twelfth century in the field of pure philosophy, and out of these he produced a rational science based on experience. And secondly, he was the founder of a school or tradition of thought at Oxford which we may trace through such names as Roger Bacon, John Pecham, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Thomas Bradwardine, and other lesser known writers on methodology and on optics. The contribution made by this Oxford school to the development of science was first and foremost to methodology, and in particular to induction and the experimental method, and to the principles behind the use of mathematics in explaining physical

¹ A complete bibliography of Grosseteste's known writings has been published by S. H. Thomson: *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln*, Cambridge, 1940. Most of his scientific and philosophical works have been published in the edition by L. Baur: 'Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste', in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Band 9, 1912. The tracts of which I have made particular use for this paper are *De Generatione Stellarum*, *De Cometis*, *De Sphaera*, *De Calore Solis*, *De Lineis*, *Angulis et Figuris*, *De Natura Locorum*, *De Iride*, *De Luce* and *De Motu Corporali et Luce*. I have also used Thomson's improved text of *De Cometis* published in *Isis*, vol. XIX, pp. 21 *et seq.*, 1933; his text of Grosseteste's commentary on Aristotle's *De Caelo* published in *The New Scholasticism*, vol. VII, pp. 218 *et seq.*, 1933; R. Steele's text of Grosseteste's *Compotus* published in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, Oxford, 1926, fasc. VI; and A. Lindhagen's text of Grosseteste's *Kalendarium* published in *Arkiv för Matematik, Astronomi och Fysik*, vol. XI, No. 2, 1916. Of Grosseteste's scientific writings of which there are no modern editions the following are the most important (I place in brackets the sources I have used): *Roberti Lincolniensis commentaria in libros posteriorum Aristotelis* (Venetiis, 1494); *Summa Lincolniensis super octo libris physicorum Aristotelis* (Venetiis, 1500); *Commentarius in viii libros physicorum Aristotelis* (MSS. 295 [fourteenth century] in Merton College, Oxford and Digby 220 [fifteenth century] in the Bodleian Library); *Hexaëmeron* (MS. Royal 6 E. V [fourteenth century] in the British Museum); *De Universitatis Machina* (MS. Cambridge University Library Ff. vi, 13, ff. 17-26, 37-43). The last three works have never been printed. Two articles which are of particular importance for the argument of this paper are those by Lynn White, jun.: 'Technology and invention in the middle ages', *Speculum*, 1940, pp. 141 *et seq.*, and by D. A. Callus, 'The Oxford Career of Robert Grosseteste', *Oxoniensia*, 1945, pp. 42 *et seq.*

phenomena. The school of Oxford was also interested in optics, for reasons that will be discussed later; and it was in this science that they put their methodological ideas into practice, and showed that they could be used to solve concrete problems.

Anyone who compares the kind of thing Grosseteste was writing between, say, 1210 and 1235, with the writings of his elders or contemporaries such as Alexander Nequam or Alfred of Sareshel in England, William of Auvergne or Alexander of Hales in Paris, or Michael Scot and the medical men writing in Italy and Sicily, will soon be convinced that something important was happening. And Grosseteste's followers eagerly followed his lead. Moreover, these contributions of Oxford during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries remain a permanent part of science; they will almost certainly prove to have had an important influence, directly or indirectly and by devious routes, on sixteenth century Italy and on Galileo. At least an equal position on the stage of European science was of course soon taken by Paris, particularly with Albertus Magnus; but Oxford retained its special position as the centre for scientific methodology for over a hundred years.

Why the promise shown in experimental and mathematical science failed, as it seems to have done, after about the middle of the fourteenth century, why these beginnings did not go on and bring about rapidly what did not in fact happen till the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is beyond the scope of this paper. But what in fact did happen — that is, that the best minds became more and more interested in problems of methodology and logic as such, without relating them to the practice of science, draws our attention to something which is essential to the understanding of any of the theoretical scientific writings of this period. This is, that during the middle ages the investigation of the physical world was regarded as part of a single activity which was concerned with one reality and truth; yet the different aspects of this reality and truth could not all be investigated in the same way or known with the same certainty. This attitude produced the conception of the hierarchy of philosophical sciences: metaphysics, mathematics and physics (or natural science); and it was essential to be clear as to what means of investigation and explanation were legitimate in each case. For this reason works on natural science were very often concerned at one and the same time with both particular concrete problems, e.g. of astronomy, optics or zoology, and also with the nature of the explanatory principles to be employed. Thus the intellectual framework provided by these principles was always consciously before the mind of the scientific writer, and it was always being modified *pari passu* with the increase in positive knowledge. In fact right down to the time of Galileo the frontiers of science pressed on these problems of the nature of explanation, of the relation

of theory to experience and of mathematics to physics, and of the use of induction and experiment in scientific investigation. And it seems that the rapid advance that took place in science from the end of the sixteenth century depended in an essential way on the long intellectual struggle during the previous centuries to bring these problems to a satisfactory solution. But with that this paper is not concerned. What it will attempt to show is that early in the thirteenth century a fundamental change took place in scientific methodology, a change that has left a permanent mark on natural science, and that this change was primarily due to Robert Grosseteste.

Grosseteste united two previously independent tendencies, the practical or experimental and the rational; but it should be emphasized that the advances made on both the practical and the rational side of science during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries began as the result of fresh literary influences, as the result of the translation of Greek and Arab scientific works into Latin. These translations included numerous practical treatises; and certainly the new conceptions of scientific explanation and investigation would have been impossible without Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and Euclid's *Elements*.

The practical or experimental habit had persisted in the practical arts. In fact recent research, notably by Lefebvre des Noëttes and those who have followed his lead, has shown that the middle ages were a period of technical invention. But were the learned, that is those who were likely to be conscious of scientific methodology, interested in these practical arts? The learned had certainly been concerned with practical scientific subjects at least since the time when Bede wrote on the calendar or when Lotharingian astronomers and mathematicians were appointed to ecclesiastical positions in England by Canute and William the Conqueror. Most of the earlier works to be translated from Arabic concerned practical subjects: treatises on the astrolabe, the calendar, the preparation of pigments, and medicine. The practical tendency of twelfth-century education is shown in the list of books recommended for study at Chartres that is given in Thierry of Chartres's *Heptateuchon*, a work on the seven liberal arts. A prominent place in the syllabus is occupied by geometry and arithmetic, and most of the works recommended are on surveying and measurement; other items are works on practical astronomy and the medical corpus of translations by Constantine the African. The same practical interest is found in a list of textbooks in use in Paris at the end of the twelfth century, as described by Haskins in his *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science* (pp. 356 *et seq.*).

The learned who used the astrolabe, who surveyed and practiced medicine, and such natural philosophers as Adelard of Bath, certainly

observed things for themselves. But some writers on the practical arts obviously knew very little of the practical side of the subject and wrote as literary men, and others described experiments they clearly had not performed. One such experiment is described in a late twelfth century *Practica Geometriae* ascribed by Tannery to Hugo Physicus, where the author gives a method for determining the depth of the sea by dropping overboard a weight with a float attached. When the weight hit the bottom it released the float and the method involved the measurement of the interval of time between the release of the weight and reappearance of the float. But his suggestion that this should be done with an astrolabe shows that he never tried it, because it is impossible to measure such small intervals of time with an astrolabe. A water-clock or clepsydra could have been used for this purpose, as Nicholas of Cues suggested when he described the same experiment two and a half centuries later.

But whether these writers were describing real experiments or only 'thought experiments', what is to be noted about them is that they all recognized that natural science rests on a basis of experience: *nihil est in intellectu quod nisi prius fuerit in sensu*. What in fact they lacked even when they habitually practised observation was not an empirical approach but the ability to transcend the rule of thumb methods of the practical arts and construct a theoretical science offering rational explanations of the facts of experience.

The construction of such a theoretical science was made possible by the rationalistic tendency in twelfth-century philosophy, though at first this had very little to do with natural science. The idea of rational explanation was developed by the logicians who expounded first the *logica vetus*, or 'old logic' based on Boethius, and who from the middle of the twelfth century made use also of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and various works by Galen. What these logicians did was to recognize the distinction, which ultimately derived from Aristotle, between experiential knowledge of a fact and rational knowledge of the cause of the fact. By the latter they meant knowledge of some principle from which they could deduce the fact; and working along these lines they tried to arrange philosophy as a system of deductions, proceeding like mathematics from self-evident propositions down to the last proposition to be demonstrated. The development of this kind of extreme rationalism was in fact part of a general intellectual movement in the twelfth century, and Anselm, Richard of St Victor, Peter Abelard and others tried to formulate theology according to this mathematical-deductive method. Mathematics was for these twelfth-century philosophers and theologians the model science, and like good disciples of Plato and St Augustine they held that the senses were deceitful and only reason could give truth. This was the view of Abelard and Adelard of Bath, and a typical expres-

sion of it is that of Hugh of St Victor living during the first half of the twelfth century. He said in his *Didascalicon* (ii, c. 18): 'The proper function of mathematics is to deal clearly by means of reason with confused actually existing things'; and he went on to say that logic and mathematics must be understood before physical things could be examined, and 'that they should put their consideration not in the actual state of things where false experience is deceitful, but in reason alone, where there is firm truth; and then with reason as the guide they could descend to experience of things'.

It should be mentioned that though geometry was regarded as the model science, the actual geometry of the period scarcely lived up to this ideal. Until the third decade of the twelfth century the chief source of geometrical knowledge was the so-called 'Geometry of Boethius' which contained certain of Euclid's axioms, definitions and conclusions, but consisted mainly of a description of practical surveying methods and the like. Geometry in fact remained a practical science till towards the end of the twelfth century, able to use the conclusions of the Greek geometers for practical purposes but unable to demonstrate those conclusions, even though Euclid's *Elements* had already been translated.

The problem that their ideal of a mathematical-deductive method raised for the philosophers was how to arrive at the prior principles from which experienced facts could be deduced and so explained. A clear psychological account of how such principles might be reached by induction from sensory experience had been given by Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics*, and Aristotle's ideas were expounded by John of Salisbury and other logicians writing in the middle of the twelfth century. But this sort of treatment of induction was of course no guide for the natural scientist. It was in fact Grosseteste, writing some fifty years later, who made the first thorough logical analysis of induction with an eye to experimental procedure.

The reason Grosseteste could do this was that in the intervening period the attention of the philosophically minded had been directed to natural science by the huge output of Latin translations of Greek and Arabic scientific works during the second half of the twelfth century. The first effect of these translations was to make scholars too much occupied with collecting and digesting the new learning to allow them immediately to turn their minds to problems of methodology. This was true of all centres of learning, whether in Paris or Italy, or at Oxford which, with Alexander Nequam, John of London, John Blund and others had already become a scientific centre by the first decade of the thirteenth century. This new learning included practical treatises on astronomy, medicine and chemistry as well as theoretical works like Aristotle's *Physics*; and it brought about an increase in practical and observational or experimental science,

usually with some useful purpose in view. Therefore it soon became necessary, even for the pursuit of utilitarian ends, to understand precisely how theory and practice or experience were to be related to each other.

Greek science itself gave only a one-sided view of this relationship, because Greek science had been largely a science of demonstrative proof taking geometry as its model. The idea of geometrical demonstration had in fact been the great discovery of the Greeks and they conceived nearly all their science in terms of deductions from indemonstrable premises. Among the Greek writers known in the early twelfth century only Aristotle and certain medical writers, in particular Galen, had seriously discussed the inductive side of science, and Aristotle was of course himself a doctor. Aristotle and Galen made a start in analysing the inductive process from the experience of particular facts to a theory that could explain them, and some further contributions were made by certain Arab doctors, in particular Haly Abbas and Avicenna. But it still remained necessary for someone to collect all these fragments together and construct a systematic theory of inductive science, and this is what Grosseteste and the school of Oxford did.

Grosseteste seems to have studied medicine as well as mathematics and philosophy so he was well equipped to apply himself to methodology. Most of his scientific works were published in Baur's edition, the most important omission being the commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*. Another important unpublished work is the *Hexaëmeron*. There are several incunabula of his logical commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* in which he gave the most systematic account of his methodological ideas. It is fairly certain from the contents of his works, from references to external events, and from references in other works to the commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* that this commentary was written before his works on optics and astronomy and other special scientific problems. Like all his contemporaries he regarded the investigation of the physical world as part of a single philosophical activity concerned with one reality and truth which could not all, however, be investigated in the same way or known with the same certainty. What he seems to have done was to work out a methodology applicable to the physical world and then to use it in the particular sciences. This methodology may be considered under two headings: first, induction, intuition and falsification; and secondly, mathematical physics.

Grosseteste's theory of science was based in the first place on the Aristotelian distinction between experience of a fact or, as it was called, *demonstratio quia* and knowledge of the cause of the fact or *demonstratio propter quid*. The object of scientific investigation was to arrive at the latter kind of knowledge because this made it possible

to deduce the fact from a more general principle and so explain it. A model of such demonstrative knowledge was provided by Euclid's geometry. The problem was how to arrive at these general principles behind particular facts.

Knowledge of particular physical facts, Grosseteste held, following Aristotle, was had through the senses, and what the senses perceived was composite objects. Induction involved the breaking up of these objects into the principles or elements that produced them or caused their behaviour. Grosseteste, again following Aristotle, then conceived induction as an upward process of abstraction going from what Aristotle had said was 'more knowable to us' (that is, the composite objects perceived through the senses) to abstract principles that were prior in the order of nature but at first less knowable to us. We must proceed inductively from effects to causes, he said, before we can proceed deductively from causes to effects. Therefore the first problem of induction was to arrive at a statement or definition of the causal principle or 'form'.

To reach such a definition Grosseteste described in his commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* a dual process which he called 'resolution and composition'. These names came from Galen and other medical writers and the central principle of his method Grosseteste derived in fact from Aristotle, but he developed it much more fully than Aristotle had done. By resolution he showed how to arrive at what he called the nominal definition. He began by collecting instances of the phenomenon under examination and noting the attributes all had in common till he arrived at the *ratio communis* which stated the empirical connection observed, a causal connection being suspected when attributes were found frequently associated together. Then, by the opposite process of composition, he showed by making deductions from this 'common formula', the relation of general to particular to be one of cause and effect; 'and we will find . . . not only the definition itself but the cause of the *differentiae* posited in the definition of the thing to be defined', as he said in his *Posterior Analytics* (ii, c. 4).

His use of these two methods can be made clear in an example which he gives in the same chapter of this commentary, namely, how to find the common principle causing animals to have horns. He began by noting the other attributes associated with the possession of horns in various animals and found that, as Aristotle had said, horned animals always had several stomachs and only one row of teeth. How was this connection to be explained? Animals with only one row of teeth, Grosseteste said, could not masticate their food properly and therefore needed more than one stomach and a mechanism for rumination. The possession of several stomachs was therefore a direct consequence of the lack of teeth in the upper

mandible, and only animals without the upper row of teeth had several stomachs. Most animals lacking the upper teeth and having several stomachs also had horns, because the hard earthy matter that would have gone to form the upper teeth went to form the horns. But some animals lacking upper teeth and having several stomachs had no horns, as for instance the deer and the camel. But horns were a means of preservation and these were animals to which nature had given other means of preservation; to the deer its rapid flight and to the camel its large body. Therefore they had no horns. He concluded: 'If therefore we wish to define this accidental natural thing "having horns" we will say that "having horns" is not having teeth in the upper mandible in those animals to which nature does not give other means of preservation in place of horns; and we reach this definition by the division of the accidental natural thing into co-accidents . . . Not having teeth in both jaws is also the cause of having several stomachs.'

Besides this orderly process by which the causal principle was reached by resolution and composition Grosseteste also envisaged the possibility of a sudden leap of intuition or scientific imagination to some much more abstract explanatory theory. Aristotle had had the same thing in mind when he spoke of the *nous*. In this case the role of induction was to eliminate false theories by putting to the test of experience consequences deduced from these theories. Resolution prepared the material for the mind's intuitive leap; composition deduced the consequences to be tested. Grosseteste held that it was never possible in physics to arrive at a complete definition of the cause or form as it was in the abstract subjects of geometry where cause and effect were reciprocating, because in physics it was never possible to exhaust all possibilities; but he held that by this process of falsification it was possible to approach closer to reality and truth.

His method of falsification Grosseteste based on two assumptions about the nature of reality. The first was the principle of the uniformity of nature, meaning that forms are always uniform in their operations, which Grosseteste stated clearly in the tract *De Generatione Stellarum*, published by Baur. Aristotle had already stated this. The second was the principle of economy which Grosseteste generalized, also from various statements of Aristotle. Grosseteste used this principle both as an objective principle of reality and as a pragmatic principle. 'Nature operates in the shortest way possible', he said in his tract *De Lineis*. And in his *Posterior Analytics* (i, c. 17) he said: 'demonstration is better, other circumstances being equal, which necessitates the answering of a smaller number of questions for a perfect demonstration, or a smaller number of suppositions and premises from which the demonstration proceeds . . . because it gives us knowledge more quickly'. This is

essentially the same as the principle that became known as 'Ockham's razor'.

Grosseteste used his method of falsification consciously in several of his scientific *opuscula* where it was appropriate, as for instance in his studies of the nature of the stars, of comets, of the sphere and of heat. The manner in which he had his methodological principles always before his mind in his scientific work is shown in his tract on the nature of the stars, which begins with a statement of the uniformity principle: 'Things of the same nature are productive of the same operations according to their nature.' The way he used the method of falsification can be seen clearly in his tract *De Cometis* which begins with the statement: 'that those who consider and make observations on things and produce a hypothesis from their observations without the foundation of reason necessarily fall into false opinions, and concerning the nature of comets there is a variety of hypotheses depending on the variety of the experience which they have received . . .'. The first hypothesis he considered was that put forward by 'those who have observed that rays of the sun falling on a mirror are reflected with visible radiation', and who held that the tail of the comet was produced by the reflection of the sun's radiation falling on a heavenly body. But, Grosseteste went on, this hypothesis was falsified by two considerations: first, in terms of another physical theory, because the reflected rays would not be visible unless they were associated with a transparent medium of a terrestrial, not a celestial nature; and secondly, because 'the tail of the comet is not always extended in the opposite direction to the sun, whereas all reflected rays would go in the opposite direction to the incident rays at equal angles'. Grosseteste considered several other hypotheses in the same way in terms of 'experience and reason', rejecting those which contradicted either the facts of experience or what he regarded as an established theory verified by experience, till he came to his final definition, which he held survived these tests; that 'a comet is sublimated fire assimilated to the nature of one of the seven planets'. It is unnecessary for the present discussion to go into what he meant by this statement.

The second head under which Grosseteste's methodology may be considered is that of mathematical physics. He adopted Aristotle's principle of the subordination of some sciences to others in a hierarchy in which the higher sciences provided the reasons for the facts observed in the lower. In this way certain physical sciences like optics and astronomy were subordinate to geometry, because while geometry in itself was concerned with abstractions like lines, circles and triangles, these mathematical abstractions were also abstract aspects of physical things. So by using geometry in optics and astronomy the higher science could provide the general principle

which explained the particular facts observed in the lower. And as optics was subordinate to geometry so the science of the rainbow was subordinate to optics.

To the precise role of mathematics in explaining physical events Grosseteste devoted a good deal of attention. He held, as he put it in his commentary on the *Physics* (Lib. i), that mathematics and physics 'have much common ground and because of this a physicist can easily make the mistake of thinking that mathematical being is physical being and that physical being is mathematical being'. Precisely how he regarded the relationship between mathematics and physics is clear from his treatment of the law of reflection of light, knowledge of which he got from the pseudo-Euclidean *Catoptrica*. Having given what he regarded as a satisfactory geometrical demonstration of this law he said in his *Posterior Analytics* (i, c. 8): 'Yet the cause of the equality of the two angles made on a mirror by the incident and the reflected ray is not a middle term taken from geometry, but is the nature of the radiant energy generating itself according to the rectilinear progress which, when it is generated on an obstacle having in itself this kind of spiritual nature, may become then as a principle regenerating itself along a path similar to that along which it was generated. For since the operation of nature is finite and regular the path of regeneration must be similar to the path of generation, and so it is regenerated in an angle equal to the angle of incidence.' Geometry could provide the reason for the fact in a descriptive sense, but it could not provide the cause causing light to move as it did in reflection, because geometry was concerned with abstractions from such causes, knowledge of which could be obtained only by taking into account the physical nature of light itself. And, Grosseteste said, in his commentary on the *Physics* (Lib. i), 'perhaps astronomy in certain parts of its conclusions is like this', for the geometrical epicycles and eccentrics with which Ptolemy 'saved the appearances' could not provide the causes of the heavenly movements.

But in spite of this, Grosseteste had a special reason for believing that it was impossible to understand the physical world without mathematics. He held that light was the first corporeal form and the first effective principle of movement by which the operations of natural things were caused. This theory he advanced in his tracts, *De Luce* and *De Motu Corporali et Luce*. He held, further, that the characteristic property of light was its ability to propagate itself in all directions without loss of substance, and that in the beginning of time God had created out of nothing unformed matter and light (*lux*) which by autodiffusion had produced the dimensions of space and then all subsequent things. For this reason he believed that the study of optics was the key to the understanding of the physical

world; and it was impossible to study optics without geometry, for, as he put it in *De Lineis* . . . , light acted according to 'lines, angles and figures'. And, as he said in *De Natura Locorum*, 'Hence these rules and principles and fundamentals having been given by the power of geometry, the careful observer of natural things can give the causes of all natural effects by this method'. The principle of economy itself Grosseteste based on the nature of light.

In accordance with these metaphysical beliefs about the nature of reality Grosseteste devoted several *opuscula* to optics, to the study of mirrors and lenses and the rainbow. In this work his use of mathematics in conjunction with his other methodological principles is seen most clearly. It is impossible to discuss his researches in detail, but his work shows him capable of an intelligent discussion of the law of reflection, basing it on the principle of economy, and he tried to produce a quantitative geometrical law giving the precise angle through which rays were bent in refraction. This law, he claimed in his tract *De Iride*, 'experiments showed us', and he held that it was also in accordance with the principle of economy. Having established his law of refraction he used it, in *De Natura Locorum*, in an attempt to explain the operation of the spherical lens or burning glass (incidentally suggesting the possibility of magnifying lenses to magnify small objects and bring distant objects nearer) and, in *De Iride*, to explain the shape of the rainbow. Throughout this work he constantly used the method of eliminating false hypotheses by an appeal to 'experience and reason', to observation or to already established hypotheses.

From what has been said it is clear that Grosseteste made important contributions to scientific methodology and that his systematic exposition of a theory of inductive and mathematical science was just what was needed at that point in the history of science. This opinion is supported by the attitude to him taken by his successors in Oxford, who regarded him as the founder of their school. Grosseteste had close relations with Oxford over a long period, first as an undergraduate, then as one of the first Chancellors soon after 1214, later as first lecturer to the newly established Franciscan house between 1229 or 1230 and 1235, and finally after 1235 as bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese Oxford then lay and under whose jurisdiction its schools came. He established in the Franciscan house a special interest in mathematical and physical science, but his influence extended to the Dominicans also and Oxford as a whole retained a characteristic interest in these subjects. Oxford stood here in contrast with Paris, where there was a predominant interest in dialectics and theology and where no scientific methodologist comparable to Grosseteste appeared before Albertus Magnus, who may in fact have been influenced by him.

Among the first of those to be influenced by Grosseteste's methodology was his successor as lecturer to the Franciscans, Adam Marsh. But his most prominent disciple was Roger Bacon, who in his elaborate discussions of induction, the experimental method, the use of mathematics, optics and the calendar was directly and explicitly following the lines along which Grosseteste had directed methodological and scientific research. Roger Bacon in his attempt, in the *Opus Maius*, to discover the cause of the rainbow followed precisely Grosseteste's methods of resolution, composition and falsification; and incidentally so also, though not explicitly, did a later English empiricist, Francis Bacon, in his well-known attempt to discover the form of heat. Another thirteenth-century Oxford writer on optics, John Pecham, also shows his debt to Grosseteste; and so do a number of other less known thirteenth- and fourteenth-century English writers on optics, in which the Oxford school retained a special interest. Later Oxford writers who contributed to the understanding of induction and mathematical physics like Duns Scotus, Walter Burley, Thomas Bradwardine and William of Ockham made use of his works and recognized that he had set Oxford methodology in the direction in which they were developing it. This Oxford methodology certainly influenced writers in Paris and possibly in Germany, and, as some recent scholars have suggested, probably contributed to the Italian methodological developments that prepared the ground for Galileo; but on that much more research is needed and it lies beyond the limits of this paper. Enough has been said to show, as the fourteenth-century poet John Gower put it, that 'the grete clerk Grostest' was able to make a new intellectual instrument and 'forge it for to telle Of such thyngs as befelle'.

UNIVERSAL INSULARITY

TERENCE WHITE GERVAIS

ALL nations, or other groups of men, tend to be insular: they are so constructed. The types and causes of insularity are, no doubt, as numerous as the groups themselves, but the paradox by which the insular and the universal create each other is worth consideration on its own account.

One of the causes of insularity is often precisely the conviction of one's own universality — a false conviction, of course, and one that ministers to the human weakness of self-satisfaction. Examples of this tendency can be found in almost every context. Thus, the English tend to regard themselves as comprising the virtues of all other peoples, because of their long-developed political tradition of liberty (which is held to be valid for the whole world), because also of their concept of 'fair-play' (which enables them to judge all peoples correctly), because of their belief in compromise (which means that, siding with neither extreme, they include all extremes), because of their isolation from the Continent (which stresses the 'reasonableness' of England as against the partisan 'excitability' of Continentals), because of their phlegmatic temperament which is claimed to contain and sort out all 'quick' truths beloved by more vivacious nations, and because — finally — of the actual world-dimensions of the British Empire itself.

A relative isolation from the rest of Europe is also found in the mentality of many Spaniards. But the Spanish conviction of Spain's universality proceeds otherwise, from impulses contrary to that of the English. It is, indeed, precisely because of the intensity and extremism, the preponderance of fire over water, in the Spanish soul, that the belief grows that such intensity *must*, of its nature, be universal in its grasp — a belief heightened by the Spanish creation of admittedly universal characters like Don Quixote and Don Juan. Add to this the sense of infinity and eternity which distinguishes the Arab Spaniard from most other speakers of a Latin tongue; add the completeness of the Spanish sun, and the 'absoluteness' of the landscape (a fact remarked on by discerning foreigners, such as the Austrian poet Rilke); add also the memory of Spain's Empire in the New World; add, finally, the very real conviction of Spaniards that human, and not mechanical, values alone really count, — and there is pretext enough for the Spanish belief that Spain comprises in itself all values. An additional factor is to be found in the history of Spain, which — more than with most countries — bears the impress of many contrasted civilizations.

If the Spanish rely partly on the imperial richness of their past, how much more so do the Greeks. And with the highest plausibility: for have not *savants* of all nations, through the centuries, declared that Greece was the universal fount of human values, and the perpetual spring of the most universal truths and forms? A slightly, if deceptively, similar belief can be found amongst certain Jews: though since the Jews do not at present constitute a concentrated national group, such generalizations must here be used with even greater caution than usual. Yet it is true to say that, from the fact that the Jews have been universally persecuted, many of them tend to believe that they are the 'universal' race: a view which receives some buttressing from the fact that certain types of intellectual Jew do seem to comprise the highest qualities of East, West, South and North.

To some extent the Greek attitude is paralleled by the Italian. But the fact that the creative period of Greek civilization ended centuries ago, while, up to the present century, Italy has continued her creative role, shows itself in, curiously enough, a less emphatic consciousness of universality—at least, a lesser pride in it. Moreover, the fact that Italy has been traversed by so many traditions, all her own, and the further fact that one of the greatest (and last) of these contained a strong element of cynicism and aesthetic hedonism, have contributed to a certain cynicism even about the 'universal' Italian values. This is the case even in Rome, though less so than elsewhere; and an added reason for the weakness of the Italian sense of universality is the regional nature of Italy's history, so that Florentine, Milanese, Venetian, Roman 'universal' values are often more appreciated than Italian—a curious blend of two extremes. But all Italian civilizations have shared in a certain 'serenity', a calmness and clarity of form, which expresses a soul without the extreme tensions of the North or East of Europe (apparent even in the French, and in incompletely European Spain). And this serenity gives its possessors a sense of completeness, and for two contrasted reasons: because the mood itself excludes such imaginative or neurotic doubts as would question the universal validity of itself, and because the artistic, intellectual, and perhaps social, *forms* created by this mood are at once so valuable and so easily comprehended and (at least on the surface) imitated, that Italy has become—with France—the recognized source of 'forms' for the West. No nation has so fully received the adulation both of 'sister-' nations and of opposite temperaments, like the North German with its traditional emotional *Drang nach den Süden*.

Almost the opposite causes are responsible for the American sense of completeness and universal value. Here there is, first, a youthfulness which tends to believe it has discovered all truth; secondly, the actual variety of racial and linguistic origins of American nationals; thirdly, the wide extent of the land, with every type of climate and

life; fourthly, the conception of political universality as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Statue of Liberty, or Lincoln's Gettysburg speech; fifthly, the lack of snobbery or of historical sense by which the Americans claim to have sorted out the truths from all European traditions and rejected the chaff; and sixthly, the success of Americans in providing the world with useful mechanical devices and labour-saving inventions, which inclines them to believe that they represent the 'inclusive cream' of all social and scientific progress.

Smaller nations are not immune from a belief in their own universality. The Poles, with their 'historic role' of bastion between Eastern and Western Europe; and the Irish, especially those living in England, who claim to combine English culture with Irish imaginative breadth; while this breadth itself both claims affinity with and makes easy the comprehension of, the cultures of the Continent. But the most illuminating examples are probably to be found among great powers. The Japanese conviction of universality has a few parallels with that of the Americans—notably, swift advance in Western mechanics—but with this important addition, that Japan feels she has beaten the West on its own field, while America has always considered herself to belong to the West. A further element is the Japanese worship, not merely of Japan, but of *patriotism itself*: they are reported to have judged all other nations by the intensity of their respective patriotisms, and to have ranked them accordingly. Thus Japan, being the most patriotic of all nations, must surely stand as the apex of a hierarchy which includes the less-intense patriotisms of less-intense nations, and be the supreme exemplar of the universal value called patriotism. Add to this the tradition that the Mikado is God-descended, and that Japan's duty is to spread her civilization throughout the earth, and a further cause of the Japanese 'universality' becomes apparent.

This last cause contributes also the sense of universality felt by the Germans. Another cause, shared by them with the Americans and the Japanese, is the rapid growth of mechanical, scientific and commercial success. And is there not something in the completeness and mass-produceability of such articles of invention and commerce, that leads to a belief in the universal, inclusive value of the objects themselves, and, of course, of their producers? But there are important variations in the case of the Germans. Their intellectual and scholarly thoroughness creates the illusion of the absolute validity of their methods and of their conclusions, and hence fosters an insular self-satisfaction. Even Hitler's extreme revolt against traditional German (and human) intellectualism was carried through with a thoroughness which derived from the very disciplines he was destroying. German thoroughness is to some extent the product of insecurity and fear; the partial exclusion of Germany, in historic times, from the

basic European traditions, accounts for this *demi-parvenu* cautiousness. And it is to be observed that, where the Prussian element is least in force, thoroughness slackens, as in Bavaria and the Rhineland. But there is a better side to this thoroughness, a side which can also be regarded as something quite distinct: the German sense of the 'infinite' and 'universal', which has led her to produce great music and philosophy. This does not demand thoroughness; on the contrary, it reaches its goal often by flashes of intuition, and indeed this type of German mentality attains the universal infinite without difficulty — without enough difficulty, perhaps, in contrast to the Mediterraneans whose 'infinity' is usually reached through a cautious, logical *crescendo* of finites. Hence the embarrassingly 'immediate' depth of the one, and the often artificial 'clarity' of the other. But what is significant is that both attitudes are liable to create insular situations: the German misdeduces from his easy grasp of the universal the idea that his thought includes all possible standpoints; while the very vividness of the Mediterranean mind, which lives in the present, sees in the finite the one undeniable object of universal validity, and thus eulogises itself as the exponent of it. Moreover, the finite and extrovert attitudes lead naturally to a self-contentedness in one's immediate environment, which is a kind of insularity.

It is remarkable, however, that a country which, with many variations, combines the Germanic and Mediterranean mentalities — Austria — should show, perhaps, less insularity than any other great cultural region. Perhaps the multiplicity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire promoted this moderation. Yet we have seen that such multiplicity can itself give illusion of universality, and hence an inverted ground for insularity. And that this did not happen in Austria-Hungary may be because its components were so obviously disunited, and also because not all of them could be considered of equal cultural value. Vienna, however, was a true creative compound out of myriad sources, and it is a tribute to it that its insularity took the least aggressive form — that of a mere conservatism in social customs. Austria, nevertheless, acquired greater insularity when set up as a separate state; and the future only will show whether she can now carry the double burden of a geographical and political 'island' and a perilously perfect universality of culture, without falling into one or both types of insularity which these conditions are liable to create. At least, she will be freed from her unnatural union with the specifically German kind of insularity, which, by a paradox, infected Austria itself when Germany 'universalized' her self in annexing the maturer nation.

If Austria has passed the crisis of her insularity, that of Russia is perhaps only in its birth-pangs. Russia has always been insular, and

for five main reasons: its distance from other centres of civilization; its centuries of cultural mediocrity; its geographical immensity, which induced a specious sense of 'universal inclusiveness'; its union of Asia and Europe, which led to the same result and which was further encouraged by the fifth cause — the genuinely universal sympathy and understanding in the Russian soul. Dostoevsky expressed this in his famous Pushkin oration, but he himself is an example of how facilely this very universality can become the forcing-ground for a complacent, and at times, aggressive nationalist insularity. To these inherently Russian qualities, the Soviet regime has added special complications. The worldwide breath of the original communist ideal itself has been transformed into a complacent self-pride in Russia as the only land which believed in the universal fraternity of the oppressed of all lands. And this pride, coupled with capitalist enmity and suspicion, has produced an extreme isolationism, intensified by both the heroic and industrial tasks which exhausted all its attention, and by the dogmatic intolerance of the Marxist creed itself. The 1939 and 1941 wars forced Russia out of this *insularity of isolation* into an *insularity of success*; each type being based on a different form of pride. Today the dogmatic insularity of Marxist doctrine and the pragmatic insularity of a military power which can dictate to almost the whole globe, curiously intermingle and qualify one another.

Chinese insularity, on the other hand, if it accords with the Russian in its origin in geographical completeness and cultural isolation, differs greatly in the absence from it of dogmatic intolerance. Moreover, the 'isolation' of Chinese culture, even in distant days, was only in respect of Europe: with most of Asia she was in cultural alliance, and often played the part of an inspirer. Today she stands perhaps alone in being admired, however unintelligently (as many Chinese lament), by almost the whole world. This may, of course, increase her insularity, which has already the advantage of centuries-old entrenchment. Perhaps the static perfection of the social structure *within* China led to a parallel immobility in its external relations (and such immobility would create insularity); but it is not obvious that this will continue in the future.

But the more carefully this phenomenon of insularity is studied the more certainly it will be seen to branch out into many types of sub-phenomena, each influencing, and influenced by, the most diverse patterns of ideas or events. No state or nation is a simple unity; and the relations between the State and political, or other, minorities within itself, or the relations between the State and a part of itself (for example, the New England section of the United States of America) which is nearer to the outside or to the traditional world, present the phenomenon of insularity in new forms. And not only

does there seem to be a kind of Nemesis by which one insularity creates another, to the ultimate detriment of all the groups concerned, but also the subtle law of *enantiodromia*, by which things or ideas revert to their opposites, seems often to be operative. All these patterns will be found, in varying degrees and interrelationships, in the different types of insularities which we have already examined. But they seem to be pre-eminent in the two groups whose analysis will conclude this essay: India and France.

Indians are insular from diverse causes: their geographical situation, hemmed in by ocean and Himalayas; the richness and variety of their land and culture, which seem all sufficient; and the very multiplicity, born of tropical profusion, which underlies all their conscious and unconscious thinking, and which has had two main results: a confusion of 'universal' India with the universe itself, and a concentration on itself exhibited in the often pedantic study and disentangling of the strands of its own multiplicity. No region of the earth has been more self-absorbed than India; even the Chinese lacked the Indian introspection, which accentuated every other tendency to Indian insularity. At the same time, the very all-inclusiveness of the Hindu ideal (so that to Gandhi, for instance, Christianity can appear as a quite natural *aspect* of Hinduism) has at once modified this insularity and at the same time recreated it in the form of self-completeness.

This sense of truth and reality as 'multiple' underlies all Hindu thought. But a further, and more realistic, aspect of multiplicity occurs in the vast variety of races, tongues, customs, and creeds which constitute India today. This multiplicity embarrasses, for it produces a chain of separate, yet interlocking, insularities: the position of Moslems, torn between all-India and all-Islamic nationalism, is a case in point. It remains to be seen whether India can perform a threefold choreography: to preserve the variety of external contacts which creates the chain of insularities, while maintaining the unity of multiple India as a single self, and at the same time preventing this very macrocosm of 'unified, multiple India' from any insularity in relation to the true macrocosm of the whole world.¹

But India is not alone in showing how self-completeness can lead either to insularity or to co-operation, according as one stresses the self or the completeness. Similar tensions occur in all nations which have reached any completeness of culture, and particularly in France. French insularity, which has progressively lessened in the last thirty years, has been based both on the caution and individualism in the French character, and on the cultural homage paid to France for

¹ Two further causes, which are also effects, of Indian insularity are the multiple insularities of Caste, and the omnipresence of ancient religious precepts and rites.

three centuries by other lands. The completeness of France is apparent also in the geographical and linguistic realms: if your country contains all types of scenery and climate, why travel abroad? If your language is the world-speech of culture and courts, why learn foreign tongues? These arguments may gradually lose their significance. The deeper causes of insularity, however, remain. The French view of truth as the exact coincidence of thought and expression, with its *penchant* for epigram, style and 'taste', leads the French often to *prejudge* the ideal unity of content and form: if the eighteenth century *chef* of words who reproached Homer for his *esprit vaste* were told that he preferred taste to power, form to content, he would reply that that was impossible, since form and content, taste and power, expression and thought, are *already* one. The political consequences of this are perilous: for the premature identification of concrete expression with the ideal leads to chauvinism, or even militarism (the army as the bayonet of the mind, which perhaps it is), to the preference for the concreteness of nationality over the vaguer bonds of religion or humanity, to naïve identification of force-imposed treaties with ideal justice, and of French citizenship with true culture (whence a Senegalese will be preferred to a German). France being the hub of culture, all who criticise French politics or personal customs are foes to 'culture'; while the French passion for logic, sometimes more passion *than* logic, leads easily to the beliefs that the mere logical presentation of an idea vouches for its truth, and that we may neglect all psychological factors in international relations.

Yet perhaps the balance between the Pagan and Christian ideals which has precisely made France such a universal cultural norm, will mitigate the evil results of such insularity: though it is hard not to smile when, at a World Conference of Faiths, a Catholic (who happened to be French) was taken ill, and his paper was read by a French agnostic, who warned the Hindus, Moslems and Buddhists that he spoke, not as a Catholic, but as a Frenchman. *Dieu, est-il français?* But then, what German or Briton can afford to make this reproach? And did not Dostoevsky threaten Europe with bloodshed to secure the triumph of the 'Russian White Christ' at Constantinople? This would seem to make the divine family relationships rather difficult, for are we not told that France is the 'eldest daughter of Christ' — a sheer chronological inaccuracy? Indeed, the French think thus because, although Paris is the Mecca of the Mediterranean world (as Vienna is of Eastern Europe), the French are, by blood and temperament, the least characteristic of the 'Latin' nations. Hence their perpetual self-assertion of their 'Latin' supremacy (although their country's name is Germanic), the result of an inferiority-complex and an inner tension which is absent in the Italians, who until the present century lived and died as Latins and Italians without publicizing the

obvious fact. Yet the very tensions and richness of the Parisian compound has produced the highest European norm, just as Vienna was more creative than all the 'purer' nationalist regions around her. It seems as if a *perspective* is often essential if the highest qualities of a situation are to be realized and at the same time freed from insular provincialism.

All nations, then, have a tendency to be insular. Even completeness or universality can, as we have seen, rebound and produce an even tighter self-isolation. The problem of the 'self', and the relation of any thing or idea to its own existence, expressions, ideals, both conscious and unconscious, to its own compensations and contradictions, is at bottom a philosophical problem, but it is one which springs to life in the conduct of the affairs of any of the complex nations of which our world is composed. It appears, for example, in the necessary political compromises between the ideal of a system and that system's self-preservation. Insularity, which is nearly always self-contradictory, is born in part of fear, of the instinct of self-preservation, and of pride. French wit ceases when the subject is France; English good humour, when the Empire is criticised; German profundity has rarely plumbed the depths of the German neurosis itself. But 'universal' insularity, so obvious in its absurdity, is a Nemesis to be avoided only turning aside in good time from all lesser forms.

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GOETHE: *Wisdom and Experience*, selected by Ludwig Curtius, translated and introduced by H. J. Weigand. *Routledge*, 16s. net.

This is a well-printed and neatly produced collection of rather more than one thousand short extracts, chosen by Ludwig Curtius, from Goethe's novels and *Novellen*, from his critical and scientific prose, letters, diaries and conversations; and Dr Curtius's selection — which is catholic, discriminating and unprejudiced — bears witness to a vast and profound knowledge of the poet's work. Dr Curtius has done well to turn again and again to that collection called *Maxims and Reflections* which Goethe himself, in the last year of his life, was planning to publish; for in the fragmentary reflections which make up the older book there is no formal context to be preserved, and thus least violence is done by the method of brief quotation. The extracts in the present book are arranged under subject-headings (chronologically within each section) and precise references are given everywhere. Hermann Weigand's Introduction reviews succinctly Goethe's work under its 'two nominating aspects — genius and responsibility'. This well-balanced introductory essay concludes (apart from an unfortunate reference, in the vein of the latest eclecticism, to Goethe's 'pragmatic faith') with a valuable note on Goethe's language.

A great deal, almost everything in this kind of book, depends on the quality of the translation. Professor Weigand's task has been a very difficult one, even though (and the reservation is less important than it might seem) he has confined himself to Goethe's prose. It is inevitable that much of the special quality of Goethe's German should be lost: its sonorous vigour, its characteristic combination of abundance and precision, its unselfconsciousness. Briefly, to read Goethe's prose is a unique experience, while to read Professor Weigand's translation of it is not, and cannot be. However, we are made to feel that he is aware of this deficiency and constantly intent on making up for it, and to ask for more would be to ask for the moon. Apart from this, too, there are a few bleak passages without much sense to them ('Let us compare the difference between a Protestant and a Catholic beggar and suppliant'); we cannot, furthermore, help feeling a little uneasy at such unpretty conceits as 'Follow Through' for 'Folge'; again, we may wonder why 'disposition' should not be thought an adequate rendering of 'Anlage'; and, lastly, we shall find that, owing either to undue circumspection and politeness or to the desire to drive home all the minor points, the emphasis of a few passages is misplaced. But their very enumeration shows that there is nothing consistent about these flaws, and on the whole it must be said that the difficult task has been well accomplished. Every entry shows the affectionate care and conscientiousness which Professor Weigand has bestowed upon his work; and frequently this care is rewarded by a felicity of phrase (as when he translates 'Warum soll sich seine [des Menschen] Eitelkeit nicht den kleinen Trugschluss erlauben?' by 'Why should not man's vanity inveigle him into this little fallacy?') which delights the reader as much as it must have gratified the translator. Nor has he been contented with mere translation. Recognizing how dubious is this method of fragmentary quotation, Professor Weigand has, as he says, 'taken liberties with the form': he has attempted — and this is perhaps the greatest merit of his work — to charge his passages with the spirit of the whole from which they were taken. And inasmuch as it is possible to inform fragments with the spirit of the whole he has succeeded. Is such a difficult undertaking justified? Would the common reader not be better served if he were given as good a new translation of, say, *Elective Affinities*? The practice (more than two centuries old) of publishing *Anas* seems by now too firmly established to require any special justification; nor is this the place to challenge it.

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At any rate, the greatest danger of such a collection — that of seeming to present positive doctrine — is here avoided. And we are grateful to Professor Weigand for not having given us 'the essence of the thought and teaching of a universal genius' (to quote from the dust-jacket of this book). Instead, with diligent regard for the all-important detail, he has succeeded in reproducing certain live traits of a work whose essence is its self.

J. P. M. STERN

CHARLES KING MCKEON: *A Study of the Summa Philosophiae of the Pseudo-Grosseteste*. Columbia University Press: Oxford University Press, 18s. net.

Those who feel discomfort with the developed apparatus of scholasticism and would cast back to earlier models might do worse than pause over the *Summa Philosophiae*, for centuries attributed to Robert Grosseteste and now, perhaps with better warrant than to anybody else, to Robert Kilwardby, the English Dominican Provincial who set himself against the *moderni* in his Order. The author was probably an Englishman, certainly a trained thinker who moved at ease amid the epistemological forms of neo-platonism, who was adept at propositional analysis and was well acquainted at second-hand with the findings of thirteenth-century physics.

The nineteen treatises, after an introduction on the history of philosophy, work through a theory of knowledge and a system of metaphysics and end with a philosophy of nature. Though dating from the same decade as the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas, the *Opus Majus* of Roger Bacon, and the *Quaestiones de Anima Intellectiva* of Siger of Brabant, the work is a monument to an earlier period of the scholastic humanism of Chartres and Oxford, before philosophy had been turned into a dust-bowl. Its intention, however, was not merely conservative, for it seems to be an example of that *Augustinisme Avicennisant* to which Professor Gilson has drawn attention. This was a guarded attempt to introduce Aristotelean elements into the body of Christian thought while keeping averroism out; its supporters venerated Plato for his closeness to divine wisdom, but praised Aristotle as *studiosior* regarding natural things, and cited him more often; they were not reactionaries, but rather like social-democrats suspecting Thomas Aquinas as a fellow-traveller.

The text of the *Summa Philosophiae* was transcribed and edited by Ludwig Bauer in 1912. Here we are given an appreciation of its place in the stream of European thought, of its occasional divergence from neo-platonism, its continuation of Augustine and Anselm, its borrowing from Arabian and Jewish philosophers, its bearings on modern systems. Sometimes the style stumbles under the load of parentheses, and one or two of the passages say the opposite of what they mean. But what is chiefly valuable is the continuous exposition, with frequent paraphrases, of the whole work; thus a hundred pages are devoted to its metaphysical philosophy.

Its movement is keyed to the augustinian dialectic: there is an abstract exemplar if anything at all is true; the affirmation of necessity implies the existence of eternal truth. Its constant preoccupation is how the Ideas enter concrete individuals. It seems to take the stuff of this world as a kind of receptacle in which there are latent powers — there is no concept of a purely potential principle that can be designated within mutable things; moreover it is a real continuum spreading throughout the spiritual world — Avicenna's doctrine of matter: both this and the doctrine of a plurality of substantial forms within one thing are criticized by Thomas Aquinas. Form as light is treated very seriously in the authentic manner of the school. A true medieval temper shows itself in the easy switch from metaphysical symbolism to the science of optics. An interesting distinction is drawn between *theosophers*, who are inspired by God, theologians, who offer rational justifications of divine truth on the proper occasions, and philosophers,

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THOMAS GILBY

JOHN CULSHAW: Sergei Rachmaninov. *Dennis Dobson, 8s. 6d. net.*

Despite the wide popularity of one piano Concerto and a few piano pieces and songs, Rachmaninov's work as a whole is far from well known. Those who respond most readily to the obvious appeal of his most familiar works seem to have no curiosity to explore the rest of his output, and those who are out of sympathy with that appeal are unwilling to credit him with subtler qualities. Mr Culshaw's chief task is to reconcile, so far as is possible, these two approaches, and he sets about it in a thoughtful and discriminating manner. The comparatively uneventful story of his life is clearly and simply told, and full justice is done to the remarkable quality of his piano playing, though it was surely a mistake to describe as 'a daring innovation' his interpretation of the March from Chopin's B flat minor Sonata, which had been adopted years before by Anton Rubinstein.

But the greater part of the book is concerned with Rachmaninov's compositions, which are discussed and analysed with great care. For musical architecture on a large scale he was not outstandingly gifted; far less so than his friend Nicolas Medtner, to whom this book is dedicated. Mr Culshaw makes no great claims for him on this score, and is indeed rather surprisingly severe towards one of his most firmly constructed works, the second piano Sonata. But in many of his largest movements the joins are too obviously apparent, especially in the otherwise admirable 'cello Sonata, and Mr Culshaw rightly regards the shorter piano works and the Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini as his most satisfactory compositions. The comments on his different types of melody are interesting, but his harmonic idiom is dismissed with disappointing brevity. It is perfectly true that, in this direction, 'he broke little new ground', but it is this very conservatism that gives his harmony so strongly personal a flavour. So many of his most successful pieces are firmly anchored, not merely to their key, but also to the tonic common chord of that key. Even in music as vigorous as the Preludes in B flat major and G minor, the harmony is curiously static, giving a remarkable sense of spaciousness, and in the later works this same breadth of outline is combined with greater subtlety of detail; in such pieces as the Preludes in G major, B minor, B major and G sharp minor, it is remarkable how successfully the musical interest is maintained with the very minimum of modulation. Mr Culshaw rightly calls special attention to the beauty of the childlike, rather Schubertian B major Prelude, and his descriptions of the songs make one wish that a wider selection of them were performed.

Over one or two questions of thematic cross-reference he enters on rather more controversial ground. With the best will in the world, the present reviewer is unable to be convinced by the alleged anticipation, in the first movement of the D minor Concerto, of the second subject of the Finale. On the other hand, there can surely be no doubt about the connections between the Preludes in C sharp minor and D flat major. Not only do the first three notes of the C sharp minor Prelude occur frequently, with the same persistence, in the D flat Prelude, but the central sections of the two pieces are built on the same figure of four chromatically descending notes, and towards the end of the Prelude in D flat, these two themes are combined most effectively. Mr Culshaw's comparison, on page 48, between the personalities of Rachmaninov and Tchaikowsky is interesting and sensitive; throughout the book he rightly stresses the essentially lyrical quality of Rachmaninov's gifts, and leaves us in no doubt that the smallness of

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output in his later years was due, not to pianistic preoccupations, but to a slackening of the melodic exuberance that is so attractive a feature of his earlier work. And his general attitude towards the music is admirably sane and balanced, not despising or underrating the most familiar works, but realizing that they do not tell us everything about their composer.

P. F. RADCLIFFE

CHARLES WILLIAMS and C. S. LEWIS: *Arthurian Torso*. Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d. net.

WHEN Charles Williams died in 1945 he left two unfinished works. One was his *Arthuriad*, a long lyric cycle on the Arthurian legend, of which 32 lyrical pieces had already appeared, 24 in *Taliessin through Logres* (1938) and 8 in *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944). The other was a prose work on the history of the Arthurian legend which was to have been entitled 'The Figure of Arthur'. In this book C. S. Lewis has put together two separate short books: the first is this unfinished fragment of Charles Williams on the growth of the Arthurian legend, and the second is an introduction to and commentary on Williams' Arthurian poems by C. S. Lewis.

In his 'Figure of Arthur', Williams traces the development of the Arthurian story from the pre-Arthurian days described in the sixth century *De Excidio Britanniae* of Gildas through the historical figure of Arthur in the ninth century Nennius. Geoffrey of Monmouth shaped the Arthurian legend; he made Arthur a king with a royal court, and Wace and Layamon heightened the kingly myth. Chretien de Troyes and Robert de Borron, typical products of the Anglo-French civilization of the twelfth century, added the theme of courtly love. In the twelfth century the thought of the Eucharist and the thought of Jerusalem were in the minds of most intellectual men. The tale and quest of the Grail were added to the Arthurian cycle by the French poets and romancers. The last poem by Chretien is the first in which any object called a 'grail' appears. For English readers it is of course Mallory who provides the complete record of the Arthurian cycle. All this story has been told many times before; what Williams does is to give a clear, sympathetic summary of the story. He writes, of course, with most sympathetic understanding of the religious aspects of the legend, and his words on the development of the Grail legend and its union with the legend of the courtly, royal Arthur are most valuable.

At the end of this posthumous work, Williams ceases to chronicle the growth of the Arthurian legend in history, and writes of the growth of that legend in his own mind, of the form it has in his poems, and was to have in his unpublished and unwritten poems. And it is this theme that concerns C. S. Lewis in the second half of the book which he has entitled 'Williams and the Arthuriad'. Lewis writes as a literary critic and as the intimate friend of Charles Williams with whom he discussed these poems in the last years of his life. He heard nearly all of them read aloud by the poet and questioned him closely on his meaning. He claims for them a profound technical and spiritual importance, although he sees the greatest danger of them not achieving a permanent place in English literature because of their obscurity. Lewis declares that three things are demanded of a great poem, Wisdom, Deliciousness (what the older critics often simply called 'Beauty'), and Strength of Incantation; and insists that Williams' *Arthuriad* has all these. Certainly Williams wrote not only with poetic feeling but with a great insight into the medieval world, and this is as clear in his poems as in the fragmentary 'Figure of Arthur'. But the poems remain difficult and obscure, and perhaps the greatest value of this book is their arrangement in a coherent sequence by Lewis, and their sympathetic explanation and interpretation by one who is better able to know exactly what was in the poet's mind than subsequent critics.

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SIR ROBERT FILMER: *Patriarcha and Other Political Writings*, edited by Peter Laslett. *Blackwell's Political Texts*, 12s. 6d. net.

On this occasion *Blackwell's Political Texts* have given us not only a well-printed edition of a not unimportant piece of political writing, but what may claim to be an edition of a seventeenth century English writer which gives for the first time a satisfactory and reliable text. *Patriarcha* circulated for many years in a number of manuscript copies among Filmer's acquaintance. It was first printed in 1680 from a corrupt and imperfect copy. A less corrupt but far from satisfactory edition appeared in 1685, and the only other edition, that of 1884; reproduced that of 1680. Mr Laslett, however, has had the good luck to find among the Filmer family papers what appears to be not only the earliest, but certainly the best manuscript of the work. It is now in the Cambridge University Library; and the text here printed substantially reproduces it. The other political writings presented no such textual difficulties, but since most of them exist only in seventeenth-century editions, it was a good notion to include them in this volume. As a whole it is an admirable piece of editing.

But further, in an introduction of some forty pages, Mr Laslett has given us the most intelligent account of Filmer and his ideas that has yet appeared. The brief account of Filmer's life is based upon considerable and profitable research, and the section of the introduction which deals with the place and significance of Patriarchalism in seventeenth-century thinking is most enlightening. Nobody supposes Filmer to be a profound philosopher, but he had something to say sufficiently cogent for his opponents to take note of it and expend much time and energy in trying to refute it. Even the best of them did not fully understand what they were trying to refute; Filmer's archaic method of argument concealed it pretty thoroughly. I am not certain that Mr Laslett has fully detected it when he sees it as a form of 'naturalism', but at least he has taken more trouble to seek it out than most of Filmer's critics.

MICHAEL OAKESHOTT

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